Willow Graham

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Willow Graham

by orphan_account

Summary

Genderbent!Will. Willow becomes pregnant after a sexual encounter with Hannibal Lecter, despite Hannibal using a condom. She then has to deal with making decisions about what to do with the baby and about her relationship with Hannibal. However, things get complicated when a serial killer who targets pregnant women and eats the unborn child, making identifying with the victims too painful and removing the option of keeping her pregnancy a secret. Does she want to keep the child? Does Hannibal want it? How will this child factor into Hannibal's plans and Willow's investigations? (Discontinued.)

Notes

Previously posted on Tumblr on my personal tumblr account. Chapters 1-5 are already posted on tumblr. They will congregate here soon enough. If you are very passionate about your views on abortion or are easily disturbed by violence against women and infants or domestic violence, then you probably want to find a different fan fic.

Impregnation

Willow knew this wasn't appropriate. She wasn't feeling stable. She was vulnerable and felt weak and lonely while also not really wanting to be around most people. She knew this.

But Hannibal wasn't most people.

She was hallucinating and imagining things and blacking out.

But something about his touch kept her more grounded than she could keep herself on her own.

She knew Alana would give her that pitying look if she knew.

She felt … guilty that she was letting her friend down, in a way. She felt guilty that she was failing Jack, as much as she was also angry with Jack…. But she did not blame Jack for any of this. For her falling apart.

That was her own failing.

As was this.

She was alone in Hannibal's house. She felt the sheets of his bed touch her naked back.

She couldn't see Hannibal as well as she knew she should. She wasn't sure what she was seeing. It … was almost a blur.

But she could feel him. Feel his hands on her body. Feel him touch her breasts with care, gently groping them. She felt him pinch her nipple, and a small sigh escaped her as she felt his hands move further down her body.

She couldn't keep track of what she was saying, and she swore she saw the head of a stag somewhere in the background, though Hannibal did not own any taxidermy animals and it made no sense for an actual stag to be in the room. Another hallucination.

But it left, and she felt Hannibal push his erection into her vaginal opening.

He slid inside of her and kept pushing. It almost hurt, but it felt like he belonged there. He was deep inside her, and she started to grind into it, pushing him even deeper. The head of his erection nudged repeatedly at her cervix.

It almost hurt to have him so deep inside of her, but she liked it.

She could make out her own words, and she realized she was quietly begging him to be gentle, to keep this gentle pace. That she was so afraid of becoming undone and breaking apart and losing her mind, that she just wanted to know that she could be taken care of and treated kindly.

She had been scared that admitting how vulnerable she felt would be too much weakness. She had been afraid that she couldn't even let Hannibal know just how scared she felt.

But Hannibal stayed gentle, kept the slow, gentle pace of the small thrusts, seeming to understand what it was she was needing and adjusting his angle now and then, providing another almost painful but no less pleasuring sensation in her.

It occurred to her too late that she had never asked to make sure he was wearing a condom, but she kept the concern to herself. Perhaps that was a mistake, but she let Hannibal continue to make love to her, continue to push and push deep in her.

He was her therapist. She shouldn't have done this. It … felt better than anything she had done in many months. Now that she thought about it, she hadn't had any sexual activity, not even masturbation, in a long time…. This was out of character for her, but perhaps it was for the better. This … this felt nice. It felt good. She wasn't asexual, but her drive had been significantly depressed the older she became. She had thought it had just been age, that that must've been how her drive worked…. But maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was caused by what was wrong with her. Whatever it was.

Alana and Jack and Beverly and the others would be so disappointed in her.

"Willow. Willow, look at me."

She did so, but he was blurry. She didn't want him to be blurry. She wanted to see him….

He brought a hand up and wiped her cheek. She blinked, and some of the blurriness went away. A tear fell down her face. She was crying. How long had she been crying?

"Do you want me to stop?"

She didn't respond right away, but she felt him still. Not move to pull out of her, but still. He was waiting for a reply, but she couldn't find one.

"Willow. You are in control here. If you want me to stop, tell me or keep your silence. I will take both as a request to cease having intercourse with you. If you want me to continue, you must tell me so."

She was in control? She controlled nothing. She couldn't even control herself. This was her decision, but she couldn't tell herself that she was really in control of her decisions….

"Why are you crying, Will?"

Will. Only her friends called her Will. Jack never called her Will, no one in the FBI except for Alana called her Will.

She had asked Abigail to call her Will.

She felt Hannibal move to comply with her silence as he indicated that he would. But she pressed her knees tight around his body, pinning him in between her legs. He paused, and she

wondered, if he really wanted to, if he could force her to let him go. And if that meant he just wanted her to feel safe.

As her therapist, of course that's what he wanted…. Was that all he was?

"Talk to me."

"What are we?"

Hannibal looked in her eyes, but she found it hard to continue to stare into them. She didn't like eye contact all that much. It made her feel too vulnerable. She was vulnerable enough.

"What are you to me?" she clarified.

"I'm afraid only you can answer that question, Will. Professionally, I am your therapist and you are my patient. Personally, we have been friends. Right now, I am your bed partner. What would you like our relationship to be?"

How could he be so calm about all this?

"If this is upsetting to you - "

"I want someone to take care of me."

A moment passed. Hannibal seemed to be looking for the right thing to say. His image was becoming blurry once more.

"Would you like that someone to be me?"

More tears fell down her face. She swallowed hard.

They were going to be so disappointed in her.

"Yes."

As the tears left her eyes, she could see Hannibal smile.

"I will take care of you, then. Do you feel like our relationship being a sexual one is beneficial to you? Or is this upsetting?"

He moved inside of her again, and her mouth fell open.

"It - it's not upsetting."

A pleasured whimper escaped her, and she closed her eyes so she couldn't see his reaction to such a pathetic sound.

"I … I only … I only fear the disappointment they will have in me."

"From who? From Jack? Alana?"

"Yes. And the others in the FBI…."

"And from those who read Tattle Crime if Freddie Lounds ever found out and wrote about it." Hannibal added, as though reading her mind.

She swallowed hard and shifted to grind into Hannibal. She allowed herself to experience the pleasure of his invasion of her body more before letting herself speak again.

"And Abigail…."

She felt his hands on the sides of her face, and he made her look at him again. He brought his face close to hers and kissed her gently. Continuing with her request (begging….) to be treated gently.

When their lips parted, she felt the heat of his breath as he spoke.

"I believe the last person you would be judged by would be Abigail. But you will not face those judgements alone. I will be there."

Silence spread out between them, and she continued to cry silently.

"When was the last time you let anyone touch you, Willow?"

"I was in college. A student in college."

"Who was he?"

She laughed a little, though not with humor.

"She. I, uh, I let her do a lot of things to me. I didn't know what I liked, and I gave her my virginity. We ended up not being a good match."

"So this is your first time being with a man?"

"Yes."

He was silent for a moment. Then - "Would you like me to continue?"

She didn't have to think about her answer. "Yes."

And he did. She whimpered as he moved inside of her, applying pressure and pushing in deep. He was silent, but his body was warm and firm and surprisingly strong. She liked the feel of him close to her, him touching her.

She didn't mind the questions he asked as they continued.

"Does this mean you are attracted to both women and men?"

"I - mmm - I think so. I'll admit to - nnngh - having fantasies where Alana and I kiss."

She was fairly certain the confession amused him. She could see his mouth twitching upward and swore she heard him chuckle a little.

"And you have fantasized about men?"

"Some. Recently, though … it's only been you."

She only had the movements inside of her to judge this on, but she was fairly sure he liked the sound of that.

Hannibal Lecter was still an enigma to her. But she liked being underneath him. She liked making love to him. She liked having him inside of her.

When they finished, Hannibal pulled out of her, and she saw that he had indeed worn a condom. She watched as he took it off and threw it away.

About a month and a half later, she reminded herself that condoms were not always fool-proof as she stared at the pregnancy test. It was positive.

She was pregnant with Hannibal Lecter's baby.

The Admission

Chapter Summary

> Willow encounters a crime scene where she learns something disturbing about the killer. It makes her reveal that she is pregnant.

She knew she had to tell someone. This wasn't something she could keep a secret. She knew she had to tell.

She should tell Hannibal.

She should tell Jack.

She might want to tell Alana.

She probably shouldn't tell Abigail, and the others in the FBI didn't necessarily have to know.

But she ended up not telling anybody. She kept it to herself when she had her sessions with Hannibal. She didn't say a word as she continued to work for Jack and teaching classes. She didn't tell anyone for about a month.

Maybe she was hoping she would miscarriage and not have to say anything about it to anyone. Maybe she wanted to figure out what she wanted to do with it on her own. There wasn't a point to telling Hannibal he was a father if she was just going to abort it. Maybe she was hoping she had hallucinated the entire pregnancy and she wasn't actually pregnant. That was something she was a bit worried might be an actual possibility. That would probably have her completely removed from the FBI and put in a mental ward.

She didn't know what she wanted to do with it, anyway. She couldn't keep it. She wasn't mentally stable enough to raise it. She doubted Hannibal wanted to be a stay-at-home father. That just didn't seem like something he was fit for. Or meant for…. She wasn't built for it. She could put it up for adoption, but what if it was like her? What if it was broken like she was? She didn't want to be responsible for bringing another Willow Graham into the world. But surely it deserved a chance? Or was the probability too high? Would aborting it be kinder? She just didn't know, and she wasn't sure if she wanted to get the input from others.

But she ended up not having a choice in whether to keep it to herself or not.

As she started to near the three-month mark, Jack gave her an assignment. Gave her the information she needed, then let her into the crime scene. She had to get into the mind of the killer. The killer of this woman. This woman who had been pregnant but was now dead and

they couldn’t find evidence of where the baby had gone. She found herself wondering just how along the woman was. Beverly said something about seven months.

Willow had to do this. It was her job. So she went in and got into his head.

The victim was still alive when he cut into her. Blood was everywhere, and he knew what he was doing as he cut her. She was watching him and screaming.

Willow was the killer, and she pulled the unborn child out of the victim’s womb.

Willow was the victim and was watching herself eating her unborn child.

In that moment, she couldn’t differentiate between her empathy for the killer, her empathy for the victim, and her own individual state. Her body was shaking and everything felt real.

It was like Georgia and Abigail all over again, but Willow couldn’t make herself pull away from it.

She was screaming, but she didn’t know if it was because she was the victim or if it was her reality. The killer wasn’t screaming. The killer was eating. The killer thought this was funny. The victim was dying. The victim was crying.

Willow was crying and blood was dribbling down her mouth and she was screaming and sobbing and shaking.

She couldn’t bring herself back into her own reality until she felt someone pull her towards them, into their arms, and heard Beverly’s voice in her ear.

The tears were her own, not the victim’s. Her throat was dry from screaming, but it did not stop the sobs.

"Willow! What’s wrong? What happened?"

She could hear Jack and the others, but not well. She could only hear Beverly clearly. Probably because she was right next to her, holding her.

Willow didn’t mean to confess. But it was all her brain could tell her to do.

"I’m pregnant!" she sobbed, gripping onto Beverly because she felt like she couldn’t keep her footing. She felt like she’d fall through the floor if she didn’t hold onto her. “The killer cuts them open and eats the fetus and makes the mother watch, and I’m pregnant!"

She couldn’t look at Beverly as she admitted it. She just lost all ability to keep herself standing. Her knees went completely weak, and she simply cried.

She hated feeling like this. Like she couldn’t keep herself together. But Beverly wasn’t weak. Beverly kept her on her feet.

She didn’t look at Jack. She couldn’t see how he was looking at her.

"Let’s get you outside," Beverly said. Willow nodded vaguely, though she wasn’t entirely aware of the movement of her head.

They wrapped her in a shock blanket, and Beverly stayed with her until she was able to calm down. With calmness came the shame, and she purposefully avoided looking at everyone and refused to speak to them.

She didn’t say a word as Jack drug her to his office and left her there. She wasn’t sure what he was doing or when he would be coming back, but she didn’t move from the chair. She wasn’t really thinking anything. She just stared at the front of Jack’s desk and spaced out.

She looked up when she heard Jack return, and she paled as she saw Alana and Hannibal enter with him.

Jack walked to go behind his desk, and Alana looked confused.

It was Hannibal’s controlled expression that told Willow that Jack had already told them.

Alana moved in to touch her shoulder, taking the position of being her friend. Hannibal kept his distance, keeping the image of her therapist. Not her friend. Not the father of the child. Willow understood that. That they couldn’t know. That they had to fit an artificial image for the others. She didn’t have problems with that.

But she swore she could see some kind of fire behind Hannibal’s eyes, and it was upsetting her. She hadn’t meant to hide it from him. She hadn’t meant to make him angry.

"Willow!" Jack snapped.

She jumped a little and turned her head to look at Jack, though she avoided eye contact.

"Did you hear what I said?"

She shook her head. She hadn’t been listening.

"Why didn’t you tell anyone that you were pregnant? How long have you known?"

Willow swallowed hard and kept from looking at Hannibal as she answered.

"I’ll be three months pregnant in two weeks."

"Three months?" Jack asked, sounding incredulous.

"It’s not that strange to not tell anyone within that time frame," Alana said, squeezing Willow’s shoulder.

"She still should have told me, as her therapist. She has no doubt been going through a stressful time," Hannibal said, and his tone felt colder than Willow was used to.

She was done crying, but she now felt more vulnerable than before.

"I’m sorry," she said, barely above a whisper.

Hannibal, however, seemed to still hear her. His eyes softened as he looked at her. For a few moments, it was as though it was only he and she.

"Why did you keep it a secret, Will? Were you afraid of how we would react?"

Willow nodded. No tears were in her eyes, but she felt so small. She wanted this to go away. She wanted to be alone with Hannibal and go into detail.

She didn’t want Jack to know the details.

"You need not be afraid of what I think, Will."

"But if you are," Alana interrupted, “we can get you a new therapist."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows, wondering if that meant anything other than what it sounded like. Were she and Hannibal fighting?

"We need you to be honest with us if you’re going to continue working for the FBI," Jack butted in. Willow opened her mouth, but Alana spoke first.

"You can’t be serious. Even if she hadn’t had an episode at the crime scene, she shouldn’t be putting herself in danger, especially when she’s is part of the killer’s target demographic."

"Agreed," Hannibal added. “Willow should stick to teaching classes for now."

Jack grumbled, but it appeared that he had to concede that he could not ignore the opinions of two psychologists.

"Fine. Willow. You need to take care of yourself. Be honest with Dr. Lecter. Follow his instructions. Can you do that?"

Willow nodded. Jack finally sat down.

"Good. You’re free to go home, but I’d rather someone take you. Do you want me to call your boyfriend?"

Willow knew what she should say without even looking at Hannibal.

"I don’t have a boyfriend."

An awkward silence filled the room, and she could feel Alana shifting her weight. She was still holding onto her shoulder.

"Would you like me or Dr. Bloom to take you home?" Hannibal asked.

Willow allowed herself to look up at Hannibal.

"Yes. I mean, yes, I’d like for you to take me home, Dr. Lecter."

Their movements were not out of the ordinary. For Alana and Jack, they were a normal therapist and a (relatively) normal patient. Normal friends. He led her to his car (Willow vaguely remembered that Alana had told her to take care of herself and be sure to eat, though Willow was unsure if she had responded properly), and the drive out to her house was quiet.

Hannibal broke the silence first.

"Why did you feel like you could not tell me?"

She did not look at him, but she was feeling less vulnerable and ashamed.

"You said you would take care of me. I was afraid you would change your mind if a second responsibility entered the picture. I … I hoped that I would miscarriage and that I would never have to tell anyone. Or that I had imagined it. Hallucinated it. I'm - I'm still kind of hoping I imagined it. That my brain was tricking me into seeing a positive reading on the pregnancy test."

He did not respond right away. But he did not sound angry.

"We will get you a second test, and I will read it for you. That said, if either of those things happened, you still should have told me. Perhaps Dr. Bloom is correct to suggest getting you a new therapist."

Willow shook her head.

"No. I - I trust you most. If I was going to tell anyone, I would have told you, regardless of the child's parentage."

A smile tugged at the corners of Hannibal's mouth.

"I care about you, Will. I want you to be safe. And I want to help. I need to know these things if I'm going to be taking care of you."

Willow nodded. "I understand. I'm sorry."

"Apology accepted. Now, have you eaten yet today?"

"No."

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes. W-Would it be too much to ask if I asked you to have dinner with me?"

"Not at all. What would you like?"

Her mouth made a real smile as she answered. "Whatever that meat with the special herbs and sauce was last time we ate together."

Hannibal's eyebrows rose slightly. "I thought you disliked the taste. Though you tried very hard to hide it."

"Oops. Well, I did. But I think the baby likes it."

A smile tugged at the corners of Hannibal’s mouth.

The Conversation

Chapter Summary

Willow and Hannibal talk about whether or not she should have the baby.

Willow sat in Hannibal's armchair, waiting for him to return from inspecting the second pregnancy test she had taken. Her stomach was starting to rumble once again. She hoped they'd be eating soon. Even though she had just eaten. The baby really liked Hannibal's rich, fancy food. She didn't really understand it all that well. The simple foods she was used to weren't sounding appetizing anymore. It was strange. But who was she to argue?

Hannibal entered the room again without the pregnancy test. She looked up at him, her eyebrows risen in curiosity.

"You were not hallucinating," Hannibal assured her. "You are indeed pregnant, and we will be parents, if you choose to take it to term."

She kept her silence for a while. Hannibal crossed the room and sat across from her. He crossed his legs and looked at her, waiting for a response of some kind. She licked her lips and swallowed slightly.

"Do you want me to take it to term? Do you want to be a dad?"

Hannibal tilted his head slightly. But aside from that, his expression didn't change at all. Her eyes fluttered closed, and she started hearing a baby crying. More hallucinations. Crap. She opened her eyes again. He didn't seem to notice that anything was wrong.

"I think you need to be less concerned with what I would want, in terms of having a child in my life. You are the mother and the law is very particular about your responsibilities towards the child."

"As the father, you have more rights, though. Even if you had raped me, you would still have an easier time putting yourself into the child's life and making sure your rights as the father were upheld."

"But I did not rape you, and I care about how you feel about the situation and if you feel like you are fit to be a mother. My opinion on this matter does not influence whether or not you believe yourself to be capable. A child needs a mother who knows that she can make the right decisions in regards to its safety."

Willow bit her lip and didn't look at Hannibal in the eye. He did not try to force her to look at him.

"But I can’t. I’m crazy. We’d be lucky enough if the child wasn’t crazy."

"You are not crazy, Will. You merely have difficulty maintaining your mental health."

Willow lifted her head to give Hannibal a look that was awfully similar to a look she would give Jack when he wasn’t looking or give Freddie Lounds. Hannibal met that look with one that dared her to verbally contradict him. She decided that wasn’t a battle she wanted to fight.

"I don’t want it to grow up to be crazy like me and hate me for it."

Hannibal was the one to break their eye contact this time.

"That is a risk if you choose to give birth to it. Even if we put it up for adoption afterwards. It’s possible that it would have difficulty being adopted if the new parents were aware of your condition."

Willow swallowed and lowered her head.

"So I should get an abortion."

She could feel Hannibal look at her again. She did not lift her head to meet his.

"I am an unfit mother. You shouldn’t jeopardize your position as therapist by revealing yourself to be the father to take care of it. It would end up being the most unwanted child in the orphanage. It’s more merciful to kill it."

"You believe that it is alive independent of you, even at this stage." It wasn’t a question.

"I believe that it’s a possibility."

"Will you carry guilt over it? Will you feel responsible for its death?"

Willow didn’t respond. It was answer enough.

"I don’t want you to make a decision that would make you feel worse, Will. I want you to make a decision that you feel confident is the right decision."

"The only thing I feel confident in thinking is that I’d be a terrible mother and that it will grow up to hate me."

Her words started to waver, and she stopped herself from saying anything further. She was tired of crying. She was tired of being weak. She just wanted everything to stop.

"What about your dogs? You take care of them well enough. What makes a baby different from them?"

Willow snorted.

"All dogs have some level of being able to take care of themselves. They have defense mechanisms, and I understand their language. I’m able to communicate with them better than

I communicate with some humans. Their behaviors are more predictable. A baby is completely vulnerable, relies on me entirely for its needs, and I black out for long periods of time. It's very possible I might abandon the baby for hours at a time, with no other adult attending to its needs, possibly end up in another state before I'm able to snap out of it and realize where it is I am. A baby could die from being left alone like that for unknown, long periods of time. Putting me in charge of a baby is dangerous."

She hung her head. Silence hung in the air. She was unsure if Hannibal knew she was looking for the words to say what she wanted to say next or if he just didn't know how to respond to that.

"The most responsible thing I can do for this child is to kill it. Spare it the misery. Spare it a more painful death."

She looked up at Hannibal and met his eyes.

The one thing she knew she liked about Hannibal more than Alana was that Hannibal never looked at her with pity. He seemed to understand what she was getting at.

She watched as his Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. Then his mouth opened and he spoke.

"If our relationship was not unconventional - or rather, if it was possible that we could be open about the child's parentage and present ourselves as a regular father, mother, and infant - would you want to keep the baby?"

She furrowed her eyebrows and looked at him, confused. He elaborated.

"If it was an option for you and I to live together and I become responsible for most of the child's needs, would you keep the child?"

She still looked confused, though she understood the question better now.

"Do you want to have the baby?" It was spoken so uncertainly, so confusedly, as though she was in a classroom and had thought she was following along with the lesson and the teacher had thrown her a curve ball that she did not confer from the reading.

"That is not what I'm asking or implying, Will. If our circumstances were different, would you want to have the child? Would you want to be a mother?"

Willow closed her eyes, and she heard a baby screaming. Screaming at the top of its lungs. A mother crying. A mother bleeding out of her empty, baby-barren belly and crying her heart out. A sadistic laugh and a baby screaming.

Her mother's words echoed in her head.

"I can't have a baby," Willow said.

"Will. If you were mentally healthy and I not your therapist, would you want one?"

"Why would that matter?"

"I want to know how much not having the baby will hurt you."

"Why does that matter?"

"Willow."

She looked up at him, and she couldn't tell if he was angry or hurt.

"It doesn't matter," she said, realizing too late that she was crying again. "So why are you asking me?"

Hannibal got up out of his chair and moved over to her, reaching out to touch her. She maneuvered around him as she stood up and stepped away from him. He stopped as she moved from him.

That was definitely hurt she was seeing in his eyes. She had hurt him.

"I'm sorry," she said, wiping her tears away. "I just … don't want to be touched right now."

Hannibal let his arm fall to his side. "I understand. My apologizes for not asking how you wanted me to comfort you."

Willow swallowed hard. "If you want the baby, I'll keep it. If you don't, I'll get rid of it."

"It has to be your decision, Will. It is your body and you who will be making the most sacrifices to bring it to term. Pregnancy and giving birth is more dangerous than people realize. Even more so with a killer on the loose who cuts expectant mothers open and eats their unborn young."

A shiver ran up her spine, and she could hear the killer laughing, even though she didn't know what he sounded like.

"I don't know," she admitted. She looked up at him, giving into eye contact and giving him puppy dog eyes. "Please tell me what to do?"

A small smile made its way onto Hannibal's face.

"As much as I would like to, I do not think it is wise to do so in this situation. I do want you to be as mentally healthy as possible, and I need you to be able to live with any decision you make."

"Damn it."

They looked at each other, then they both were smiling, then both were laughing.

Faux Clinic

Chapter Summary

Willow tries to get an abortion, but she accidentally goes to a faux clinic set up by a pro-life organization. Hannibal finds this organization to be quite rude.

Hannibal wrapped up his last therapy session of the day, closing the door behind his patient. He technically still had his session with Willow, but that wasn't for a few hours. It was a fairly relaxed day, and Hannibal was curious to see how it would unfold.

Willow had informed him over the phone that she had decided ultimately that she was going to abort the baby and asked if that was all right with him. He honestly still was unsure on how an infant would factor into his plans for Willow and how it would affect his relationship with Willow and if that was an additional dimension that he was willing to put up with, so he said that if it was what she wanted, it was perfectly all right with him.

That phone call was about a week ago, and Willow had, interestingly enough, made the appointment for that day, before her session with him. He agreed that the less time in between the abortion and their meeting again, the better.

Neither of them informed Jack that she was getting an abortion, nor did they inform Alana or most others. Willow had said that if she was going to tell anyone else, it would be Beverly, and only if she wanted Beverly to go with her or to help her find an abortion clinic.

Hannibal actually had no idea what Willow had chosen to do, if she was going to do it all on her own or rely on Beverly. He had encouraged her to tell him what her ultimate plan was, but the closer to the date to the abortion, the less she talked in general.

They were technically dating, Willow coming over to his house many times to share meals with him. Abigail was there once during one of these dates, and she had later asked if something had happened between him and Willow. Hannibal had been vague, mostly because he was unsure if an outright lie was a good idea at this point in time. Abigail was the only one he could potentially trust with the knowledge that his relationship with Willow was developing into a romantic attachment, but he did not think now was the right time to divulge that. He was still a little concerned that he could not entirely trust her with too much information, and that definitely fell into the category of too much information.

So Abigail was completely unaware that Willow was pregnant, and Willow talked less and less about the baby in general. If asked a direct question, she would answer, but it was clear she wasn't enjoying it, and she refused to talk about how she felt about aborting the child.

If he was going to be entirely honest with himself, he rather hoped she would open up again. He didn't quite like the silent treatment he was receiving, but he understood that she wasn't keeping things to herself out of rudeness or distrust.

She was sad. And she was trying to keep going and not let the depression crumple her by not talking about it.

But she would have to open up eventually, and Hannibal would be there to take care of her and be her support, her crutch. Her most important friend.

He did not expect to receive a call from Willow two hours before her appointment.

He did not expect her to be in tears.

"Willow. Take a deep breath. Then repeat yourself. I cannot understand you."

"They - they weren't a real clinic - !"

Hannibal stilled, the phone pressed up against his ear. He absorbed the information as she continued.

"They - they were really a - a pro-life organization p-pretending to be a clinic - !" She was sobbing, and Hannibal could hear cars rushing past in the background. "They - they took my pants and wouldn't give them back un-until I listened. I - I ran out without them - !"

Hannibal stood up and moved around the desk to grab his coat, still holding onto the phone to his ear.

"Where are you? I'm coming to get you."

She gave him the street name.

"Do not move from there. Find a roof or an overhang to stand underneath, protect yourself from as many prying eyes as possible. I will be right there."

He did not break any speed limits, but there was a dangerous edge to his calmness.

This pro-life organization was being very rude.

He found Willow standing on the side of the street on the sidewalk, near a bus stop. He pulled over, got out of the car, moved around to the other side, and opened the door for her. She hurried into the car, her pale legs completely uncovered and Hannibal noticing the underwear she had chosen to wear having a paw print design.

He moved back to the driver's side of the car, shrugged his coat off, and handed it to her to cover herself up. Willow swallowed hard and pulled it over her lap. She was no longer crying, but her face was wet with the tears she did not wipe away.

He drove and stayed silent for a while. She did not look at him, but her face was red and she clearly was still distressed. He let her have some time to pull herself together before

speaking.

"Where was this fake abortion clinic?"

Her expression transformed into a pained look, not one that was only suffering from humiliation but also exhibiting pain from anger at one's self for falling for such a front.

She was going through too many emotions, and it would make her easy to manipulate if he had to.

"On the corner." She told him exactly where on the corner it was.

Hannibal put the information away for later.

"Would you like to go to your home? I do not have clothes that would fit you."

Willow nodded quickly, and that was where they went.

He got her redressed once they were at her home, and she cuddled up to her dogs. He stayed standing - not really a fan of the dogs and how much hair they got onto everything and wanted his suit to stay dog-hair-less - but he listened to her, listened as she talked about what they had said, what they had done, how they had tricked her and apparently must have tricked several other women. She talked about how they made her feel guilty for making her decision to abort the baby, made her feel like she was a worse person than she actually was, than she felt like she deserved, simply because she did not feel like she was capable of raising this child.

Hannibal listened and gave her the feedback that she needed - that those people were wrong to have done what they did, that what they did was illegal and that they would be punished, that it would always be Willow's decision on whether or not to abort the baby, and he would help her find a legitimate abortion clinic.

She shook her head. "Not - not right now, not right away."

"I understand. But when you're ready, I will help you."

She nodded, but she still looked significantly shaken.

He wondered how this would affect her decision about the baby, but he wasn't going to prod. Not yet.

He had a plan for if she aborted it. But he was curious as to whether or not keeping the baby would be a good idea as well. But it was still her decision. He knew that if he got too involved with her decision, the plausibility of her eventually divulging that information - to Alana, to Beverly, to Jack - was too high. The plausibility that he, Hannibal, insisting on something that she, as the mother, may decide is the wrong decision would jeopardize the entire point to taking Willow in, the entire point to manipulating her.

It was part to just keep him out of prison and keep from getting discovered. But he did love Willow, in his own way. He wanted to keep her. He wanted to have her, to own her. And he

was doing a good job of it so far.

But this was risky. Adding a child to the dynamic had not quite been in the plan.

He had served her - and by extension, the baby - the clerk who had sold him the defective condoms just last week.

"Do you want me to stay here with you?" he asked her. Willow managed to smile a little.

He liked it when she smiled. She was the only one who was remotely capable of getting inside of his head, even if she did not realize it, and thus she was the only one he really felt like he could connect with. Though her smile wasn't truly a happy one, it was enough. Hannibal could play pretend.

"I don't want to be alone, but - but I'm not blind to the fact that you hate dog hair."

Hannibal allowed himself to smile a little in return.

"That may be, but I am willing to stay if you need me."

She mulled it over for a moment, and he watched her as he did so.

"It's okay. You don't have to. I - I can call Beverly or - or Alana."

"But will you?"

She was silent, and he knew the answer was no.

"If I was not adverse to dog hair, what would you ask of me?"

She looked up at him, and the need - the attachment, the dependency - that he saw there was exactly what he wanted to see.

"I would ask you to sit here with me and the dogs and hold me for a while." And he could see how much she wanted that in how she looked at him. "But it's okay if you don't want to."

Hannibal unbuttoned the suit jacket he wore, took it over to the coat rack, and hung it up. He then moved towards Willow, stepped around and over the dogs surrounding her, then nestled himself beside her, wrapping an arm around her.

He looked at her in the eyes, and some of his smile was produced by the knowledge that only he got to do that. Only he got to have this eye contact with her so effortlessly. Only he got to touch her like this. She pushed all the others away, but she let him in. And from the inside, he would mold her, make her fit in his life like a key in a lock. He would make it so she could enter his world and not endanger him.

"Will. Would you call me your lover?"

She was silent, but she slowly nodded after a bit of thought.

"Would I be a good lover if I left you alone when you needed me?"

She shook her head.

"Would a good lover be unable to get past a few dog hairs when you are in so much pain and carrying his child?"

She took longer to respond, but she shook her head once more.

"I want to do right by you, Will. I want to be a good lover to you."

He could hear the movements in her throat as she swallowed.

"I guess that makes me lucky, then. It doesn't really matter if you're good to me because you're the only one I can rely on. I … I just don't want you to change your mind about - about wanting to take care of me."

She looked away from him as she said this, thus she missed the slight widening of his smile.

"You do not have to worry about that, Will. You just need to worry about taking care of yourself."

She nodded, but he knew that wouldn't be the last of that topic. Willow Graham did not take care of herself. And while Hannibal wanted her under his control as much as possible, she couldn't be too dependent on him or else she would become a liability in a different way. But he expected that she was aware of that. It was why she kept the pregnancy a secret in the first place. She knew dogs were preferable to babies because they still had instincts independent of their owners and could still make their own decisions and be able to take care of their basics. They knew when to use the restroom, when they were hungry, and they knew how to go about fixing those problems, even if it caused inconveniences.

Willow would be his dog, his pet. Not his infant.

He stayed with her until she fell asleep. He helped her actually get into her bed and tucked her in. One of the dogs then hopped up on the bed and lay beside her. The other dogs set up camp around the bed on the floor, and Hannibal saw himself out.

He went home to get his supplies, changed his clothes, then drove to the fake abortion clinic.

They were still open, though it was late in the night by this point. How convenient.

He walked through the door, and the secretary looked up, genuinely surprised to see a man without a woman coming through their door.

"May I help you?" she asked.

He locked the door and pulled down the blinds. He could hear her moving from where she was sitting.

"Sir, you're not supposed to - "

"A woman came in here today," Hannibal said, as though making typical, casual conversation. He turned towards the secretary, strode towards her. “She believed she would be receiving assistance with an abortion of a baby that she felt she could not take care of. Incidentally, she was entirely correct. With her mental instability, it would be hazardous for her to take care of the child and I am in no place to acknowledge my fatherhood."

The secretary backed up to the wall, her back pressing up against it. He walked right up to her, not allowing her room to move or get away from him.

"Your organization has not only threatened the safety of my unborn child, but you have further damaged that woman’s mental state. She had made a very difficult decision and you humiliated her for it."

She was shaking, and he could see the fear in her eyes, and he did not care either way. She was only good for one thing, and after that, she would be nothing.

"You are to give me the names and addresses of everyone who has taken part in this deception. And you are to tell me how many people are here in the building. I will not accept lies. I will know if you’re lying. You do not want to lie to me."

Stammering, the secretary pointed to the desk. “All - all the information is in the address book in the d-drawer. The - the lime-green one." She swallowed, trying to save face. “It - it’s only me and the manager right now. W-we were closing up."

Hannibal held her gaze for a moment, then determined that she was indeed telling the truth.

He went to the desk and pulled out the lime-green address book.

"I wouldn’t do that if I were you," he said, turning to look at the secretary, who was just a few feet from the fire alarm. “You have already been quite rude." He put the address book where it would be safe. Then he walked towards her once again.

"P-please - !" she said, realizing that she was in great danger.

He revealed the scalpel in his hand, then slashed her throat. She crumpled to the ground.

He would finish her in just a bit. First, the manager.

The manager didn’t see him approach at all. The scalpel cut across her throat. Blood sprayed and spilled. He then removed enough clothing to give him access to what he wanted. He cut into her and performed his bit of surgery.

He completely removed her uterus. All the plumping that women needed to bare children. He removed it.

He was mimicking the Jack the Ripper Whitechapel murders on purpose. He thought it a sweet irony.

When he was done with the manager, he went back to the secretary and did the same. She was already dead by the time he performed the surgery, but that didn’t matter to him.

For people like them, this was delightfully shameful and no doubt would humiliate the entire organization, their families, and their churches.

He put the organs on ice, took off the blood-splattered plastic covering, took the ice container back to the car, then drove home.

He wondered what he could use the uteri for…. They didn't exactly look like just anything one would eat. He'd probably have to grind it up.

Change of Mind

Chapter Summary

Willow changes her mind about the baby. Hannibal works on making arrangements.

Chapter Notes

This is the last chapter that I had available on my tumblr. There will be more chapters, but idk when they'll be posted. If everything goes as planned, this'll be a pretty long fic.

Willow sat in her chair, taking deep breaths and waiting for Hannibal’s response to what she had said. He tilted his head, curious about her statement.

"You want to keep the baby."

She nodded. “Yes."

"What changed your mind? The encounter with the fake clinic?"

She pressed her lips together, her mouth becoming a thin line before she swallowed and answered.

"It - it was part of it, but - but it’s more than that."

"More than being afraid that they were right in what they said about you?"

"Y-yes, I - I know I can’t take care of it, but I’m nearing the point where it’s illegal for me to abort it, and - and when I look at commercials meant for moms of newborn babies or toddlers or when I walk past stores selling things for small children, I - I get this weird, almost happy, bubbly feeling inside. Like, I think this might be the glow that they talk about pregnant women having, this - joy that’s expected to come from having children."

"Do you feel like you love the child?"

Willow paused for a long time, and when she spoke, she did not answer the question.

"I don’t want it to be a secret anymore that it’s your baby. That you’re closer to me than you’re supposed to be as my therapist. I … ."

She trailed off, and Hannibal let that information absorb. He waited to see if she would speak again.

"Are you saying you want to have a family with me?"

"I … I want you to be part of my family."

"As your caretaker?"

Willow laughed a little.

"Historically, I think the name for that is husband."

Willow trembled visibly, and Hannibal - Willow could tell that Hannibal hadn't even thought of that as a possibility or an option. He appeared to be shaken or taken by surprise by the suggestion.

"You don't have to actually marry me," she said, "I don't like the idea of a wedding, really. But I - I could move in with you. We could live together and a nanny could look after the baby. The - the dogs would have to get used to being outside, but they're adaptable and can be retrained to behave by your house rules."

"You want to be my wife, if only in a social definition." It was a statement, not a question.

Willow nodded.

Hannibal took a deep breath and broke eye contact with her. Her trembling increased.

He didn't speak for a long moment.

"I will need to refer you to another therapist if we do this. You can always tell me anything and we will address it like we do in our sessions. But Jack - and not just Jack but all of my colleagues, including Dr. Bloom - will not accept the idea that I remain your psychologist and be your husband."

She nodded, showing she understood.

"I will locate someone who we can trust to be a good nanny for the baby. As for the dogs, we can design a room in the house for them, near the backdoor. I do not want them roaming around the house freely, but I see no reason to upset their habits entirely. They are not that much different from people in that they get anxious when moved to a new place, correct?"

Willow nodded, her mouth turning upward into a smile.

"Thank you."

"I have one question for you, however."

"Go ahead."

"When you ask this of me … are you saying that you love me?"

Willow swallowed again and lowered her eyes.

"I trust you more than … anyone else. I don't … want anyone else to touch me or look after me or hear my most inner thoughts…. If that is what love is meant to be, then yes, I love you. But I … have never been in love, so I may be misunderstanding the concept…. Do you love me?"

She looked back up at Hannibal, the frame of her glasses preventing eye contact.

Hannibal did not take a long time to answer. But he did take his time, as though finding the right words to use.

"I do."

A funny feeling went through Willow at that, and she smiled big and couldn't help but laugh a little.

It was later that week that Willow met Bedelia Du Maurier.

"Hello, Dr. Du Maurier."

"Hello, Willow. Come in."

She walked into Bedelia's "office" area - it didn't look like an office. If anything, it looked like a grand sitting area.

"This is an interesting office building you have."

"It's actually my home. I'm technically retired. I'm doing this as a favor to Hannibal."

"Oh. I didn't mean to be an inconvenience."

"Don't worry, it's not you who is being inconvenient."

Willow made herself comfortable in the chair across from Bedelia.

"Hannibal has told me a lot about you. Due to confidentiality, I'm not allowed to say what he said, but you should be aware that I already have some idea of who you are. Or at least how Hannibal sees you."

Willow attempted to smile, but she really didn't manage it.

"The - the only person I'm really able to open up to is Hannibal, so you're probably the only person other than him who knows that much about me."

"There's one thing I don't know."

"What's that?"

"Why Hannibal wants you to see me."

Willow swallowed hard. “He didn’t tell you?"

"Tell me what, Willow?"

"I’m moving in with him." She watched as Bedelia’s eyebrows raised. “And I’m having his child."

Willow watched as Bedelia’s expression remained stoic, controlled. But she figured she knew what was going on behind those golden locks of hers.

"I know how it must sound, but it’s not as bad as all that. I’m … I’m looking forward to it. He’s finding us a nanny, since I’m not mentally stable enough to take care of it, and I don’t have to be alone anymore."

"Was being alone a concern of yours before you started meeting with Hannibal?"

Willow shook her head. “Not really. I actually prefer the company of dogs to humans. Until recently, I was trying to abort the baby, but … the time for that has passed anyway, and I want to keep it."

"What changed?"

Willow shrugged.

"Something must have changed," Bedelia insisted. Willow shrugged again. Bedelia changed tactics. “What is different about Hannibal?"

"It feels like I can trust him. Like I can trust him to take care of me and not take advantage of me."

There was some kind of change in Bedelia’s expression, but Willow was having difficulty discerning what it was.

"And you haven’t had a connection like that with anyone else?"

Willow shook her head.

"What about family members?"

That just made Willow laugh. “I would sooner pry myself open with pliers than open up to my family."

Bedelia left that topic alone (for now). But Willow had her own question.

"How do you know Hannibal? You’re both therapists, but…."

"Hannibal was my patient. He was one of my last patients before I retired."

"Ah."

Willow had no reason to ask her why she retired; she had only heard of Dr. Du Maurier from Hannibal and people retired. Though she was a bit confused as to why someone so young and pretty had quit working.

It was that weekend that Willow visited Hannibal at his home.

"I am pleased to announce that we have a nanny for the baby."

"Oh?" Willow brought a piece of meat to her lips and chewed. When her mouth was no longer full, she asked, “Who?"

"The mental institution has agreed to let Abigail have a part-time job of sorts. I asked her if she’d like to take care of our baby, and she agreed."

Willow swallowed.

"Abigail knows now?"

"I did not go into complete detail when I had asked. I told her that I had a lady friend who was in need of a nanny and that she would be living with me."

A small smile tugged at Willow’s lips. “So my identity will be a surprise, then."

"Indeed it will. Are you nervous about that?"

"Well, now I’m curious - and nervous - about how she’ll feel about that, considering…."

"We can be a little family together."

Her smile widened, and she continued to eat.

"I’d like that."

Hannibal smiled at her.

"I knew you would."

Jack Is Concerned

Chapter Summary

Jack tries to get Willow to confide in him.

Chapter Notes

Didn't expect to write this so soon. Well, lucky for all of you.

"You're moving?" Jack asked, leaning forward on his desk.

Willow nodded. "To Baltimore. I'm up here a lot, anyway. Makes more sense than to keep commuting to Wolftrap."

"I thought you liked the privacy it gave you."

Willow didn't look him in the eye; her glasses made it easy to avoid doing that.

"Dr. Lecter and I agree that I should stay with someone who can look after me, considering my … condition."

"Do you mean the pregnancy or your mental state?"

Willow swallowed.

"Both."

Jack sighed a little, then leaned back in his seat.

"What's the address?"

"I'll give it to you after I've moved in completely."

She could feel Jack's eyes on her, watching her critically. Judging her. Analyzing her.

"Willow. Are you all right?"

"I'm fine, just pregnant."

"That's what I mean."

"Hm?"

Willow moved her head so she could watch Jack more - not his face, but his movements. He was shifting in his chair, then he was standing up. She moved her head upward.

"It's just - you don't seem like the type of woman who would sleep with a random stranger. Yet you're not in a romantic relationship with anyone and you haven't told us who the father is."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows. "So?"

Jack moved around the desk and came to stand beside her. She lifted her head more, watching Jack cautiously.

"What I'm trying to ask is … did someone hurt you, Willow? You can tell me. We're the FBI. We can - "

"No one raped me, Jack," Willow said, her voice becoming icy. "And even if I had been, it is my business what I do with that information."

"Willow - "

"Don't - " She stopped herself, swallowed hard. "I just don't want to tell anyone who the father is yet. You aren't my father, and it is not your right to know."

She felt the tension in the air grow.

"I'm just concerned for you, Willow."

Willow finally looked up at him, just barely not looking him in the eye but looking enough to fake eye contact.

"Jack, it is my child, and I am the one who makes decisions about its life, not you. If I want to keep the father a secret, it is my right, and you do not get to take that away from me."

"I'm not TRYING to take anything away from you, I'm trying to make sure you're safe!"

"And what does you knowing the father's identity do to achieve that at ALL?" Willow didn't like this conversation. She didn't like it at all.

"I want to make sure no one took advantage of you in the office!"

Willow's eyebrows furrowed more.

"You think I slept with someone in the FBI?"

"I can't think of anyone else you would trust."

Willow snorted. "So who are your suspects? Zeller? Price?"

Jack was giving her a very displeased look, and she found it rather amusing.

"Oh, c’mon, tell me your big bad theories about how poor little me got knocked up."

The look intensified, and Willow couldn’t help but let herself giggle just a little. The hormones was making it easier to smile for some reason. But they also made her cry more easily; it was a double-edged sword.

Jack took a deep breath and muttered under his breath. “Hate sex with Zeller because he can’t stand you and is jealous of you and Katz, drunken accident with Price…." Willow could see there was more theories in that black, almost bald head of his, so she waited. Then, even more mumbled than before, “Or someone targeted you because of the TattleCrime.Com articles…."

"No one raped me, Jack," Willow repeated. “Any other theories or is that it?"

"That’s it," Jack admitted. Willow tried to hide a smile by pressing her lips together firmly.

"So if I eliminate Zeller and Price, what’re you gonna do about your burning curiosity?"

Jack gave her a look. “Go back to the drawing board, since you won’t tell me."

She thought about that for a while, then nodded. “Okay then. I have a home to pack up, so I’m gonna go, unless you need me for something work-related."

Jack shook his head. “No, you can go. Just - promise me Dr. Lecter is aware of the parentage."

Willow allowed her smile to come onto her face. “Yes, he does, Jack."

She hadn’t told him she had switched therapists yet.

The Revelation

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal and Willow tell Jack, Alana, Abigail, and Team Sassy Science who the father is.

Hannibal was the one who helped Willow move from her home in Wolftrap, Virginia to his home in Baltimore. The dogs were both excited and nervous about the move. Once they got out of the car for the last time (Willow made sure they got plenty of potty breaks), one of the smaller dogs dashed out of the backseat and dashed across the yard multiple times before choosing a place to mark their territory. Hannibal's face changed just enough that Willow felt the need to apologize, then explained that it was just what dogs did to tell other dogs that the area belonged to them. Hannibal accepted the answer, but it was clear he did not really like creatures that peed on his property.

Willow was given her own room, though Hannibal made it clear that she was always welcome to spend the night in his. She rather liked that; it wasn't so big a change that she felt like she was being smothered and it let her control the amount of privacy she wanted.

Willow set the last box in the bedroom, then focused on breathing as she looked around the room. Part of her was a bit worried. What if this didn't work out?

She became startled as she felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned her head and saw it was Hannibal. She relaxed (as much as she could, considering who she was). He gave her a little smile.

"Do you like your room?"

She nodded, one hand moving to touch the hand on her shoulder. She hesitated, and Hannibal moved his hand to take hers into his. She managed a little smile.

"What about your headaches? How are they?"

"Still pretty bad. As are the hallucinations."

"There are some painkillers I have that can help with the headaches. Would you like them?"

Willow nodded, not asking if it would be safe to take them while pregnant because she trusted and assumed that Hannibal wouldn't suggest it if they weren't.

When Hannibal returned with them and a glass of water, she tilted her head and looked at them curiously.

"That doesn’t look like Advil."

"It’s not. It’s prescription. It’s perfectly safe and I took the liberty of getting it for you."

"Oh. Okay. Thank you."

She took the pills, popped them into her mouth, took the glass of water, drank, then swallowed the pills down. Hannibal watched as she did so.

"What would you like for dinner?" he asked.

Willow thought for a moment, her hand rubbing her baby bump.

"Should I be concerned at all about how much the baby likes red meat?"

The corners of Hannibal’s mouth quirked upward.

"I do not think so. Nothing wrong with being a carnivore."

Willow laughed.

"Well, there should probably be vegetables present in any case."

"Of course."

Hannibal paused for a moment, then leaned forward and kissed her forehead. Willow’s smile widened.

He then went to prepare dinner, and Willow went to help the dogs get settled.

Now that she was moved in, there were important things for her to do. For both of them to do.

First, they both felt it was important to make sure Abigail was fine with the nanny position once she was aware of who she would be nannying for. But Willow also needed to inform Jack about her new address, which ultimately would reveal the rest of the details about the baby and about seeing Bedelia instead of Hannibal for therapy. Once Jack knew, everyone else would.

Hannibal had an idea on how to break the news to all of them. Willow thought it was crazy, but she was willing to do it instead of talking to Jack on her own.

So that weekend, invitations were sent for a dinner party at Hannibal’s.

Abigail arrived with Alana, and Bella Crawford came with her husband. Beverly, Brian, and Jimmy arrived separately, but all three were equally confused as to why they were invited at all. Willow’s car was hidden behind the house, and she was hiding out in her room with the dogs for now.

Winston seemed to have developed separation anxiety ever since they moved in. He followed her everywhere around the house, and he did not like sleeping on the floor anymore. He couldn't come to dinner with her, though, so she was trying to soothe him before she went to reveal her presence to everyone else.

Meanwhile, Hannibal was being a marvelous host.

"Thanks for the invite, Doctor. Never really been to a really fancy dinner before," Beverly said as he took her coat.

"Then I'm happy to give you the opportunity and will forgive faux pas with the silverware."

"Heh, how considerate."

Beverly smiled at him, then continued into the house, rather in awe of the decor.

Eventually, all of the guests were in the dining room. A chair was left open at the end of the table opposite Hannibal. Beverly and Abigail sat on either side of the empty chair, with Alana on Abigail's other side. Jack and Bella sat on either side of Hannibal. Hannibal took away the unoccupied chair between Jack and Alana.

Jack furrowed his eyebrows a little, noticing that he was leaving the other open chair.

"Are you expecting someone else, Dr. Lecter?"

"Yes. She'll be arriving shortly."

Abigail perked up a little. "Is she the one I'll be nannying for?"

Only Hannibal and Abigail knew what she was talking about.

"Nanny?" Alana said, turning her head towards her.

"I was given permission by the hospital to hold a part-time job, remember? Dr. Lecter found me one."

Hannibal leaned slightly on the back of his chair.

"The answer to your question, Abigail, is yes. She will be the one you will be working for."

Abigail smiled, content and having no reason to be confused or suspicious.

Alana and Jack, however, were looking at Hannibal with a lot of confusion. And Jack was looking at him with suspicion on top of that.

"What are the details of this job?" Alana asked.

"The new mother is now living with me. Abigail will be coming here to the house often to take care of the child once it is born."

Everyone but Bella and Abigail furrowed their eyebrows.

"*That* doesn't sound suspiciously familiar at all," Beverly remarked sarcastically.

Hannibal glanced at her, but returned his gaze to Alana and Jack.

"Willow said she was moving," Jack stated, staring at Hannibal with a look that made it very clear that he did not want to be told that his suspicions were true.

Abigail looked from Jack to Hannibal, curious and not knowing why that factored into this at all. Bella, however, did talk to her husband about his concerns at work (and concerns about employees), and her head bowed and her lips pressed together. She kept her silence on the matter. For now.

"Hannibal - " Alana started, her voice rising slightly, but then the door opened, and Willow walked in, slightly better dressed than usual. She was just wearing her plaid button-up shirt and her suit jacket, but the pants were more like slacks instead of blue jeans. Her hair had grown quite a bit since she last saw Abigail, so it was longer than usual, but it was still very curly.

She swallowed hard as she walked towards her seat, subconsciously laying a hand atop her baby bump. Hannibal moved around the table to pull her chair out, and she avoided looking at Jack and Alana.

The sound of Brian snorting made her glance at him though as she reached her chair.

"You want to say something, Zeller?"

"Nope."

"Yes he does," Jimmy goaded.

Beverly snorted. "It's just not polite."

"I'm not saying anything."

Willow sat down and Hannibal pushed her chair in. It was Jimmy who ended up speaking up.

"You getting laid by your therapist is both strangely fitting and difficult to imagine."

"And why's that?" Willow said, humoring him.

"Can't imagine you having sex."

She snorted.

"Can't imagine either of you, actually. He's so proper, and you … ."

"Give off the impression that I'd start screaming if I was so much as touched?"

"Yeah, pretty much."

Willow shrugged.

Brian still had a look on his face like he was thinking something not nice and it was highly amusing to him. But he still didn't say anything.

"Zeller, either come out with it or I'll make you sit next to Jack."

Brian debated it for a moment more, then said, "Actually, I've done worse, so I'm just gonna keep quiet."

Willow snorted. "Well that's not judgmental."

Brian snorted and tried not to show how amusing he found the whole thing.

"Well, I wouldn't be laughing if I were you, Jack thought you and I had hate sex."

"Ew!" was Brian's instantaneous reaction, which made Beverly and Jimmy burst out laughing, and Willow actually smiled too.

"You're grosser," Willow jabbed.

Brian just laughed with her and didn't retaliate, which Willow found interesting but didn't comment.

"Really, Jack? Willow and Brian? I'd be thinking it was either you or Dr. Lecter," Beverly said.

Jack gave her and Brian glares, then turned said glare onto Hannibal as he returned to his seat.

Abigail was just watching quietly, eyes wide. It was clear she was taken aback, but aside from that, it was difficult to ascertain what her reaction was. Willow finally looked at her, and Abigail smiled at her.

"I look forward to helping with the baby," she said, and Willow smiled back at her.

"Thank you."

"Hannibal, can I - " Alana started, but then Jack began with "Lecter, we need - " and they both said at the same time "talk to you?" and "to talk."

Hannibal stayed seated, but did not touch his silverware.

"You may speak up here at the table. This is why you are all here. You would all find out eventually, regardless, and I felt it best to bring it up with all of you all at once, to avoid Willow experiencing too much stress at work. She does still encounter all of you, even if she is back to mostly working as a teacher now, due to the pregnancy." He took a breath, then continued. "I am no longer her therapist. She is now seeing Bedelia Du Maurier. However, if she does return back to visiting crime scenes, I will still go with her because Dr. Du Maurier does not leave her house and is technically retired."

Alana seemed to be having difficulty keeping herself together. It made the words get caught in her throat, and Willow felt bad for making her feel that way. She knew … she knew what she had with Hannibal wasn't appropriate, considering what they had been originally, and she knew Alana would be disappointed, but she hadn't really thought that Alana could look so *hurt* by this.

She had expected Jack to be angry, but mostly at her. She hadn't really expected him to be angry with Hannibal.

"I trusted you to take care of her mental state!" Jack snapped, his tone silencing the rest of the conversation at the table and dampening the spirits of the three forensic scientists. Willow swallowed hard and watched him and Hannibal - mostly Hannibal.

Hannibal stayed calm. "And I am. Just in a different way than was originally intended."

Jack's teeth gnashed - Willow could see his jaw moving and almost hear the grinding. He wasn't just angry. He was furious.

"We've had this conversation, Jack. I was not raped or taken advantage of. You don't have to be - "

"HE WAS YOUR THERAPIST!"

Willow flinched a little, but she was the only one who did. Hannibal's eyebrows raised slightly.

"You assumed she had been taken advantage of by someone in the office originally or someone had forced themselves upon her," Hannibal stated. "You feel like you've failed her somehow?"

"Do *not* psychoanalyze me, Dr. Lecter, I am *not* in the mood!"

The look Hannibal gave Jack after he yelled at him was rather chilling.

"If you cannot be calm about this, I must ask you to leave," Hannibal said. "This is my home, and you are here by my invitation."

Jack took a deep breath and fell silent. It was clear that he was still fuming. It was quiet for a while afterwards.

It was broken by the sound of a dog whining. Willow flushed a little bit. Hannibal moved his head a bit, trying to figure out where it was coming from.

"It's Winston. He's having a hard time getting used to the house," she said as an explanation. "He probably feels like I've been apart from him for too long."

"Which one is Winston again?" Hannibal asked as he ate.

Willow smiled a little. "Not the one that pees on everything. That one's outside."

A bit of relief made its way across Hannibal's face, and it was amusing to her.

"Do you know what will make him stop that noise?"

"Being in the same room as me."

Hannibal debated for a moment, then said, "If he behaves himself, he may have a plate on the floor."

Willow's eyebrows flew up. "I thought you said the dogs couldn't roam around the house?"

"As of this moment, that sound is far more grating than dog hair embedded in the carpet."

Willow smiled a little, then got up. "I'll be right back then."

Winston then joined them in the dining room and got a plate of food near Willow's chair. He was quiet and stayed quiet, only moving so he could put his head in Willow's lap, his wet nose nuzzling up to her baby bump.

Alana still hadn't said a word, and it was obvious the news had hurt her. Willow didn't know how to address it, and Hannibal wasn't attempting to.

Eventually, though, she did speak up. She turned her head towards Hannibal and said, as calmly as possible, "You give Abigail drugs without my permission and without a prescription, you violate the professionalism that you're supposed to have with your patients, and you impregnated my *friend* when you were in a position of power over her. I accused you of being rude when you drugged Abigail, but do you have any idea how *betrayed* I feel right now?"

Willow kept her head down, and she could not actually see how Hannibal was responding to Alana's words.

Hannibal responded quietly. "I did not take the feelings of anyone aside from Willow into consideration when all of this occurred. I was very much focused on how she was handling and feeling about the situation - and also on how I felt and what I wanted and what would be best for the both of us. I will admit that I have been going at the situation from a very unprofessional angle. Which is why I switched her to a different therapist. One who is much better at being professional than I. Or even you."

Alana was breathing heavy, and she was close to crying.

"I am sorry that this turn of events has hurt you, Dr. Bloom. But I will not apologize for deciding to be a part of the family that Willow is making for herself. You will have to decide if you are willing to still be both my and Willow's friend given the circumstances."

Alana nodded, and Willow focused on scratching Winston behind the ears.

Abigail changed the subject entirely. "Do you have a nursery set up yet? Or names picked out?"

Willow shook her head.

"We could take you shopping for baby stuff," Beverly said. "Get ‘em some cute blankets and stuff."

The corners of Willow’s mouth twitched upward.

The rest of the dinner went very quietly.

Willow saw them all out, Hannibal choosing to clear the table and do the dishes, and Bella encouraged Jack to leave the subject of Hannibal and Willow alone for now. Have a night’s rest first. Calm down some.

Brian Zeller was the last to leave, and he hovered in the door way with Willow for a moment, Winston standing between them.

"I - I actually owe you an apology."

Willow’s eyebrows raised. “You do?”

"Yeah. I … When I said that I had done worse, I wasn’t saying that I had slept with uglier or crazier girls or saying that Lecter could’ve done better or … whatever. I was saying … I was saying I’ve gotten myself into big trouble because I wanted sex and affection, too."

Willow leaned a bit on the door frame.

"Thank you."

Brian gave her a half-smile.

"Take care of yourself, okay?"

She nodded. “Drive safe.”

"Will do. See you at work."

Willow waved him goodbye as he went to his car, then she closed the door and went with Winston back to her room.

Jack and Alana

Chapter Summary

Jack and Bella talk, and Alana cries alone.

At home, Jack was in a mood. And Bella understood it. Jack felt betrayed by Hannibal, like Alana did. He felt like Hannibal had betrayed his trust. Bella herself did not feel betrayed, but while she did disagree with what Hannibal had done, she also knew that it had nothing to do with Jack. Not really. It had everything to do with that poor woman with the hallucinations and the ability to empathize with serial killers.

Bella pulled the covers up and got into bed. Jack was sitting in it, glaring at the wall.

"Jack."

"It is wildly inappropriate of him."

"Yes it is."

"He was supposed to provide a *safe*, *not* stressful environment and make sure she was mentally fit to *work*."

Bella waited for more to follow.

"Now she can't work because it puts her physical *and* mental well-being at risk *and* puts that baby at risk."

"Because she profiles serial killers?"

"Because we're hunting one who targets pregnant women."

Bella's eyebrows rose.

"You haven't told me about that one."

Jack didn't comment on that. Bella let it drop.

"As true as all of those things are, I think there's something more to this, Jack."

Jack looked at her. She brought a hand up to cup his cheek.

"I think she is more to you than an employee."

Jack lowered his gaze a little. He was quiet for a while.

"I don't want to coddle her, but I do want to take care of her.... She needs protecting."

"Like a daughter would?"

Jack looked back up at her. He nodded.

Bella smiled at him.

"You're a little late on this front, but that does not mean you can't still support her. But I don't think she or Hannibal will be receptive to it."

"You're right," Jack sighed. "She was very against sharing any information with me - or anyone. If dinner is any indication, she didn't talk to *anyone* about any of it."

"Do you trust her to know when to open up?"

Jack brought a hand up to rub the back of his neck.

"I don't know."

He finally lay down, and Bella lay down with him.

"I want to trust that she'd tell me. But she's very secretive. Most of the time, I'd have to go to Dr. Lecter for a report on how she was doing."

"So she opens up to Dr. Lecter?"

"Yes, that's definitely true."

"Who said she would stop?"

Jack furrowed his eyebrows.

"I disapprove of Dr. Lecter's lack of professionalism in this case, but I don't think Willow is in any danger. I think Dr. Lecter saw something in her other people don't get to see and got overly attached. And from what you've told me about her, I don't think she'd put up with blatant abuse of power."

Jack thought about her words, and Bella settled into the bed.

"Goodnight, Jack."

It would be good for Jack to slowly put his energy and nurturing efforts into someone else, Bella thought. For when she wouldn't be here with him.

Unlike Jack, Alana didn't have anyone to talk to about this. She couldn't talk to Abigail - it wasn't appropriate - and she didn't have a boyfriend or husband.

She went home, took a shower, curled up in bed, and tried to work through the feelings she had on the subject.

She recognized that there was nothing she could do about it. She recognized that she couldn't have done anything about it because Willow didn't confide in her. She recognized that this did not actually seem like an abuse of power on Hannibal's part but a neglect to upkeep professionalism in the face of powerful emotions and feelings.

She realized that she was a little - or a lot - jealous of Hannibal. It wasn't that she wanted to be Willow's lover, but she was jealous of how he so easily knew what he wanted from Willow and knew what to do to get it.

She had worked very hard to get where she was in her friendship with Willow. Hannibal managed to achieve so much, so much quicker, and all because he had the nerve to go against rules that existed to protect patients.

She was angry and hurt because it was behavior that showed Hannibal *shouldn't* be trusted as a good, ethical therapist or even an ethical human being, and yet Willow felt safer with him than with her.

She cried it out and let out all of the bad feeling and energy.

She would express support of Willow's decisions when she next saw her. But Hannibal will be getting a cold shoulder from her for quite a while.

Meanwhile, Hannibal propped himself up on the bed and glared at Winston, who was staring at them as they lay on the bed.

"I can't do this with the dog staring at us."

Willow sat up and looked over at Winston. She flushed a little, then looked back at Hannibal.

"Sorry...." Her shirt was unbuttoned, and they had been kissing. "Winston. Go."

Winston tilted his head at her and didn't move. She sighed and uttered another apology.

Hannibal simply slid off the bed and stood up, turning towards her.

"It is all right. We can make another attempt at intimacy at a different time. It has been a long day, and you no doubt need your rest."

She managed a small smile at him.

"Thank you. For everything...."

He smiled at her. "Do not mention it. You are a part of my family now, Will. It is my job to take care of you."

Willow blushed and bowed her head. She was so lucky.

Dinner Party

Chapter Summary

Hannibal is hosting a dinner party. He wants Willow to attend and is going to help her find something to wear. But Willow just doesn't fit in.

Hannibal was starting to think this whole living-together thing was actually a bad idea.

He wasn't going to retract the offer, especially not now that she was moved in and getting comfortable and settling in with a new bank and giving Jack all the information he needed to bill her properly. The dogs were settling in, but the dogs were part of the problem. He knew Willow would never get rid of them, however, and exterminating the beasts did not work in his favor. At the moment.

But he really hated the one with the territory fetish. The one that kept *peeing* on everything. Willow may have been trying to curb the action, but Hannibal had the strangest feeling that the dogs were actually fighting *him* for territory on his own property.

Winston did not like leaving Willow alone in the home. Winston was oddly fine when Willow was not at home to be followed around. He'd sit at the front door and wait for her, but he was still quiet and stayed in one place and didn't make much fuss. Once she got home from work, though, Winston whined and scratched at doors, and Hannibal could no longer say that he had undamaged expensive oak doors in any area of the house.

Because Winston roamed the house, the other dogs thought they were allowed to do so as well.

Hannibal bit at his tongue, sometimes making it bleed, to keep himself from saying anything.

He knew Willow could see how this was grating him. And he could see that she was trying to re-train them. But he could also see that, so much like a dog herself, she was just as nervous and unused to being in the house as Winston and the other dogs were that sometimes she wasn't as strict with them as she should be.

He knew she didn't mean to be rude or disrespectful through it.

He knew she needed time to adjust, and she was still pregnant. There were hormones she was adjusting too, and she was getting bigger and unable to do some of the things that she used to do. Sometimes she was too brash or rude with the dogs - or to other people - and later would mutter an apology. Things she normally would be able to keep to herself slipped out of her mouth because her brain-to-mouth filter had bigger holes than usual.

Pregnancy was making her, in her own words, "a real bitch."

"Please don't use that word in reference to yourself," Hannibal had said at the time, having taken pause after the word passed her lips.

She had raised an eyebrow at him.

"Why not? I've - "

"Please," Hannibal repeated. She fell quiet, then nodded.

Hannibal would not admit it aloud, but he was glad that she didn't really change all that much in how she interacted with him. She had already been herself with him, in their sessions. He already knew what she was like without the filter. Hannibal didn't have to adjust too much to her "new" rudeness. And she was never really rude to Hannibal, not in any way that would make Hannibal angry with her.

No, it would take a lot more to move Willow from house pet to dinner plate.

As much affection as Hannibal had for Willow, though, they were two very different creatures.

Hannibal attended operas and classical concerts. Willow stayed home and listened to angry rock "music" - something Hannibal honestly refused to acknowledge as music at all. It sounded like finger nails on chalk board and demonic screaming to him. It was on her iPod, and she listened to it much too loudly.

Hannibal drank Chianti and cooked gourmet dishes for dun. Willow couldn't appreciate the finery and stuck with cheap, basic food and drink when he wasn't there to force tasteful things upon her. She didn't mind it, and the baby craved many fine red meats, but that made it all the more obvious when Willow was having a craving of her own.

Willow wore clothes from Good Will and Salvation Army and surplus supply stores and occasionally from a low-cost department store. Hannibal wore expensive suits and refined cologne and fine leather shoes and fancy ties. The little perfume Willow owned was cheap knock-off brands from relatives who insisted she smell of flowers she didn't even like.

Willow loved dogs and Hannibal hated the mess they left in their wake - the dog hair, the slobber, the scratches on his doors and walls and furniture. Willow was bad at cleaning up after herself - and them - and Hannibal had a compulsion to keep his home as clean as possible. He kept growing more and more irritated that "as possible" was no longer "as possible" as it used to be.

Willow still slept-walked, and that created messes sometimes that Hannibal would have to clean up in the morning.

It was as though Hannibal let in eight dogs instead of seven, and he knew a ninth dog was on the way.

He realized he had not taken many things into account.

But he would look at Willow's face and see that she was aware of her surroundings and feeling guilty about what she was doing to his home and his life, and he could not bring himself to regret his decision. It may not be ideal, but he did like having her here.

Willow reminded him of a kinder time....

However, that did not mean he did not suddenly have cravings for things to be like they were before she moved in.

It did not mean that he did not want to change her just enough so that she could fit into his former life.

So he came up with a plan to slowly ease her into the part of a member of the upper class. The part of a lady.

He knew it was impossible to completely change her. She was from Virginia and raised in Louisiana. Her father had been completely absent and her mother extremely controlling and abusive. On top of that, she had been very poor. She was accustomed to being poor and knew how to live while being poor. She was not used to money and probably never would be. Hannibal was pretty sure some of her eating habits were actually indicative of some type of eating disorder, as a result of not having enough to eat when she was a child. But it did not seem to cause her too many problems, medically, so he left it alone. She ate when she was hungry, and that was really all that mattered.

Either way, he could at least teach her how to present herself to the upper class. It was a useful skill.

So he took her shopping at a store where they sold dresses meant for pregnant women. Willow had a perpetual frown on her face, though she did not object to the shopping. They walked from the car to the store, and Hannibal noticed that Willow's face became more and more concentrated as she approached it.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" she eventually asked as they approached the door together. Hannibal paused in his reaching for the front door handle.

"Why wouldn't it be?" Hannibal said.

Willow avoided looking at him as she answered.

"They aren't going to believe I'm like them just because I'm all dressed up. They aren't going to believe I'm . . . like you. And our situation doesn't exactly scream "classy." I'm nothing but white trash from Virginia who had the nerve to tarnish your good name by getting pregnant with your baby out of wedlock."

Hannibal opened the door for her.

"It does not matter what they think," Hannibal said. She looked over at him.

"They're your friends, aren't they?"

"No. They are not friends. Contacts, acquaintances. But not friends."

She furrowed her eyebrows.

"Then why throw dinner parties for them?"

"Because it reflects well of me. Keeps thoughts of me in the forefront of their mind when they consider who they can recommend to their friends for therapy."

"It's a business tactic?"

"Exactly."

Willow lowered her eyes. "Then why invite me? I'm not going to help with that at all. I was your patient, remember? I - "

"Are not a tarnish on my name but a reminder to others that I am a human being. It is a situation that may not be favorable to others, but they can mutter to each other about stories of true love and following one's heart and what not. Make themselves feel better about themselves while tearing others down for their decisions."

"That sounds . . . tedious."

"It is. But it is how people think. You carrying my baby and living with me and attending parties in your own home will not reflect poorly on my psychiatric practices."

Willow pressed her lips together, but she entered the maternity boutique.

The only arguments they had inside the store was over the price.

"This is far too expensive, you can't spend this much on me."

"Have you *lost* your mind? I won't be able to wear it after the baby is born, it doesn't make sense to spend so much on something I won't be able to wear in a few months."

"Hannibal, is it really necessary we get it *here*?"

Hannibal knew she was trying to respect him by being concerned with his money, but it did not stop the protests from being tedious and annoying. He managed to soothe her however.

"Willow, you are my family now. It is natural for me to want to give you nice things."

She flushed, though she looked no less unhappy. But she protested less.

Picking a dress out wasn't easy, though. Willow didn't really understand why. But Hannibal insisted on getting a "perfect dress" for her and the baby. The clerks helping them looked like they were silently judging them quite a bit, but none of them said anything.

Eventually, Willow came out in a fine maternity dress with a floral pattern that differed just enough from the others she had tried on that it stood out. It was a subtle difference, but

something clicked in Hannibal's brain.

It reminded him of her.

"We will get this one," Hannibal said. Willow just seemed relieved that they were done. "You look beautiful."

"I'm glad you like it," Willow said, not sounding or looking all that happy. But Hannibal knew he could take her at her word.

After they got back home, Hannibal then continued to plan for the party and Willow went to tend to the dogs, continue their re-training and unwind with them.

It was later that week that Hannibal's dinner party was held at the house.

It was obvious that Willow wasn't comfortable being in a room with so many people, so many people dressed up so fancy and talking about things she didn't know much about or know about at all, many of them giving her derisive looks.

Hannibal realized that perhaps this had, also, been a bad idea.

He knew what people were thinking of her. Willow knew what people were thinking of her. And some of them had the nerve to actually give voice to their opinions, within earshot of them. Willow avoided eye contact with everyone, including Hannibal, and eventually she excused herself and hid in the back of the house with the dogs.

Hannibal gritted his teeth and had never been more happy that these people were devouring human flesh.

There were many guests. He knew who all of them were, but he couldn't keep track of all of them the entire time.

It wasn't until he heard the rabid barking of dogs that it came to his attention that something wasn't quite right. He heard the hurrying of footsteps as whoever was being attacked or chased by Willow's dogs ran through the hallways. Hannibal went to investigate the matter, quickening his steps, but by the time he reached the source of the confrontation, he could only see the backs of heels of shoes escaping out the front door. All but Winston dashed out of the house after him. Winston stayed in the doorway, barking loudly.

Hannibal moved to stand next to Winston, watching as the dogs chased one of his dinner guests out of the house. He looked down at Winston, his eyes zeroing in on the bloody fur on the back of Winston's neck.

"Winston."

Winston stopped barking and looked up at Hannibal.

"Where's Willow?"

Winston immediately trotted down the hall, and Hannibal followed him, closing the front door.

Willow was leaning against the wall, her hand and arm cut and bleeding. She was trying not to get blood on the dress, but it was clear that it would need to be cleaned immediately. Hannibal went to her side, grabbed a nearby cloth, then pressed it onto her wound.

"What happened?"

Willow took a deep breath and tried to calm herself.

"I thought I was hallucinating it until I felt him touch me."

Hannibal watched her face, waiting for her to continue.

"I - I kept hearing the fetus eater laughing. He . . . he finds my attempts at trying to fit in here to be hilarious. He thinks I'm a parasite, using the baby as an anchor to things I'm not entitled to...."

She swallowed hard.

"Then I felt a hand on my bump and felt breath on the back of my neck. I grabbed the nearest thing to use as a weapon - sorry about the vase by the way. I got cut when it shattered and tried to use the shattered pieces to hurt him.... The dogs saw what was happening and got involved...."

Hannibal set his jaw.

"Did he say anything to you?"

She shook her head.

"I felt an erection pressed into my back. I think that communicates exactly what he was trying to do."

"Were you lucid enough to see what he looked like?"

She nodded. "But he doesn't look all that different from your other contacts. I'd need to see a picture of him to point him out."

"That can be arranged. Would you like me to call Jack?"

"We don't need Jack, we can call any cop."

"I would like to call Jack."

Willow looked up at him. The bleeding had stopped, but Hannibal did not let go of her arm.

"Fine. We'll call Jack. I can . . . give him a suggestion on what to look into with the victims. What their marital statuses were, how they got pregnant, stuff like that." They were silent for

a while longer as Hannibal removed the cloth and examined the wound.

"What is going on in here?" asked a shrill voice. Hannibal looked over his shoulder at one of his more annoying guests.

"Just an accident. Everything is taken care of now." Hannibal hoped the dogs caught the man and ripped him to shreds. He would cook them gourmet meals for the rest of their days. No mediocre kibble from Kroger anymore for good attack dogs.

Winston sat at Willow's feet, looking from Willow, to Hannibal, to the annoying guest in the door way.

"Go back to dinner. I will be right there."

"Dr. Lecter, you've let this place go to the dogs."

"They are very nice dogs," Hannibal said, looking back at Willow. Willow wasn't looking at him but down at the now bloodstained dress.

The guest left with a small "humph" and Hannibal decided she would be the next one on their dinner plates.

Willow pressed her lips together before she spoke again.

"Sorry about the dress."

Hannibal gave her a small smile.

"Do not worry about it. I know how to get blood stains out. You are free to wear whatever you would like for the rest of the party. Maybe even wear one of those horrid graphic tee rock band shirts of yours."

Willow laughed a little. "They would have heart attacks."

"That they would. We'd have to bury them in the backyard to prevent you for being arrested for murder."

Now she was smiling too.

"The dogs could dig the holes, so no one would know any better. Then we could plant gardens on top of them."

"Like Emmett Stammings."

"Like Emmett Stammings."

Hannibal went to get a first-aid kit, then finished patching Willow up. She then stepped out of her dress and went towards her dresser to pull out non-bloodstained clothes. After she was dressed once more, she turned to Hannibal.

"I'll call Jack now."

"Good. I will subtly encourage everyone to leave."

"Thank you."

Hannibal paused and looked at her for a moment.

"Willow. Would you like to know why I picked out that specific dress for you?"

Her eyebrows rose.

"Uh, sure."

This time, Hannibal was the one to avoid eye contact.

"When I was young, I had a little sister. She was very beautiful. She loved childish songs and flowers and animals. I have missed her very much ever since she died. The dress reminded me of her, and I know that she would have liked to have known you very much."

Willow blushed slightly, and her smile faltered some.

"I'm sorry...."

"Don't be," Hannibal said. He then left her to call Jack.

The rest of the dogs returned as the dinner guests were filing out of the house. One of them had a very bloody mouth. Hannibal fed it left overs of "lamb" brains.

Baby Eater

Chapter Summary

Jack investigates the attack on Willow.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Willow sat at a table, with Jack, Hannibal, and Beverly in the room with her. On the table in front of her lay many pictures of men who had attended Hannibal's dinner party. Willow looked from picture to picture, shifting them around so she could get better looks at some pictures more than others. She tossed away the pictures of blond men, narrowing the identity of her attacker to be someone with dark hair.

She swallowed hard and leaned back in the chair, her hand dropping to rub her baby bump.

"He . . . he smelt of cigarettes, mixed with that wine that you were serving. So whoever he is, he smokes.... What, I can't be sure. He . . . I don't think he has a beard or much scruff, because I didn't feel it against my neck.... But honestly, he could be any of these." She pushed away the pictures that she felt were definitely not her attacker and then gestured towards a collection of pictures of clean-shaven, dark haired men. Hannibal frowned, and Willow wasn't looking at him to find out how he was frowning. But she could assume he was frowning, and she knew Jack was.

"Is there anything else you remember?" Beverly asked. "Anything that could point us in a more clear direction?"

Willow swallowed.

"You said you saw who he was," Jack said.

Willow gave him a look.

"I was coming out of a hallucination, I can't . . . be entirely certain what was hallucination and what was real. But I'm getting better, and I haven't hallucinated smells or touch before, so there's that." Taking a deep breath, she addressed Beverly. "If the voice I heard wasn't an auditory hallucination . . . then he sounds . . . like honey with crushed almonds in it would feel and taste on your tongue. Gravely, but smooth enough for it to be respectable."

"You said that the voice you were hearing in your head belongs to the fetus eating serial killer," Hannibal said.

Willow nodded. "It was the same voice I have been imagining to belong to that killer, yes. But that doesn't necessarily mean I'm right. I can figure out who did what, but not details like what they sound like."

She looked over at Hannibal - and was taken aback by the fear that she could pick up on.

"Hannibal?"

"I understand that. But the implication that I invited the fetus eater to my home and left you unattended long enough for him to try to hurt you is . . . frightening."

Willow turned her head away from him and lowered it.

"Dr. Lecter, is there a man that smokes and has a voice like that who is in these photos?" Jack asked.

Hannibal reached out and picked up a photo of a middle-aged man - younger than Hannibal, but older than Willow.

"Joseph Underhill. He smokes more or less whatever he can get his hands on as long as it is of high quality and is - is a surgeon...."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows.

"What kind of surgeon?" Jack asked.

"He performs C-sections."

The silence in the room was heavy after that. A cold fear ran up Willow's spine.

"He would know how to find the fetus in the mother and how to take it out," Beverly stated. Willow tried to keep her breathing even.

"He works with mothers and babies on a daily basis," Willow said slowly, her hands gripping the fabric of her shirt. "He sees all kinds of families in his work, and of course, everyone makes silent judgments in their heads. About who is a good mother, who is a bad one, who should never raise children.... Maybe his class status has something to do with it, but either way, he has decided it's up to him to decide who should have children and who shouldn't. If they've gotten pregnant once, they'll do it again.... If they're a bad mother, it doesn't matter if they live or not. Their death is a bonus. By eating the baby, he takes it into himself, protects it, so it will never be hurt by bad parenting.... It's dead and can't be hurt by anyone."

Willow felt the tears sting her eyes, but they did not fall.

"And an unwed mother from Wolftrap, Virginia - mentally unstable and hunts down serial killers because she can think like they do and owns seven dogs that make a horrid mess of the home of the very respectable Hannibal Lecter - isn't good enough to have and raise a child."

Jack and Beverly didn't know what to say. What could they say? If Willow was right, that this Joseph Underhill, was the Fetus Eater, then - then that meant that he had tried to kill her and

take her baby from her because he sees her as a bad mother.

"I want to go home," Willow said, standing up. Hannibal stood up with her and put an arm around her shoulders.

"We'll have guards stationed at your house," Jack said. "Just in case."

Willow nodded, and Hannibal steered her slightly as they left.

They didn't talk to each other as they went back home. Tears rolled down Willow's cheeks, and she did nothing to wipe them away. Hannibal glanced over at her and noticed them, but since he was driving, he could do nothing about them.

Dinner that night was a simple soup, and Willow spend the night in Hannibal's room.

As they both failed to actually sleep, Hannibal petted her hair and gently kissed her forehead.

"I won't let anything bad happen to you. Not while you are mine."

Willow let her eyes close and she moved her head so it pressed against him. She could hear his pulse in her ear, the blood rushing through his veins.

"What was your sister's name?"

"Mischa."

"If it's a girl . . . would you like to name her after her?"

Hannibal was quiet for a few moments.

"Thank you."

"Mischa Lecter it is then."

"Even if it is a boy, we could still name him that. The spelling would just be different."

"Oh?"

"Mischa's name was spelled with a c in between the s and the h. For a boy, it would be spelled M-I-S-H-A. It would be quite becoming for either gender."

"Hm. If you like it, I like it."

"Good."

No one would have called what they were doing snuggling, but it was certainly the closest to that that either of them had ever gotten in a long, long time.

Jack sent someone to investigate Joseph Underhill. But Joseph Underhill was no longer at his house. When they went to question him at his work, he was in a surgery and one of the interns went to inform him that the FBI wanted to talk to him.

The agents never saw Joseph Underhill. He snuck out of the hospital while avoiding them and escaped.

It didn't do anything to make them think he wasn't the Fetus Eater or Willow's attacker. If anything, it made their suspicions stronger. Jack organized a search for him, announcing that they suspect Underhill of being the Fetus Eater. It wasn't information that was put in the papers; just that they were looking for Joseph Underhill.

Willow and Hannibal were given guards to be stationed at the house. They made sure that Willow would be safe at home, where she was spending most of her time when she didn't have a class to teach.

However, it didn't make Hannibal any more comfortable with leaving Willow at home. But he still had work, and there was no way to tell anyone that honestly she was a lot safer from any serial killers if she was with him at all times than with any FBI agents.

The whole thing just put Willow on edge. She didn't know how else to feel about it. It was difficult to actually go about her regular day. This was the first time . . . the first time she could get inside the person's head without taking a piece of it with her when she'd leave their head. She didn't feel attached at all, and she was glad for it, but it still felt . . . strange. If anything, it made her more uneasy about getting inside of his head. It was just . . . so repulsive and scary to her.

In his head, she was everything he hated about the world. And that had never been the case before. Going into his head felt like it could kill her, even if he wasn't actually there.

She thought she was in her classroom. She thought she was giving a lecture.

But she blinked, and then she didn't know where she was.

It looked like a warehouse.

She could feel eyes on her, and she slowly turned around.

Joseph Underhill was behind her. In a warehouse. Alone.

She was alone in a location with the Fetus Eater.

Her eyes trailed to his hands. He was holding a scalpel.

Her eyes went up to meet his. He was grinning at her in that way that people do when they're at their limit but feel like they can still make a difference about their situation.

"You don't really think you can raise that little baby properly, do you?" he crooned, taking a step towards her.

She didn't respond. She was just trying to find a way to defend herself and protect her baby.

She stepped away from him as he came forward.

What was she going to do?

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this has taken so long. A combination of "too much Hannibal at a time" and anxiety issues has caused a focus on my Supernatural fan fiction endeavors instead as of late.

Tough Mama

Chapter Summary

Hannibal learns the Fetus Eater has Willow.

Willow's cell phone rang, and there was a tense moment where Underhill's eyes went to her pocket. She kept her eyes on him as she moved to answer the phone.

He ran at her.

Willow flipped her phone open and brought it up to her ear, moving to get away from him.

"Willow? Where are you?" she heard Hannibal ask on the other end.

"I don't know - he's here - !"

Underhill was fast. And in her condition, she really wasn't. She managed to dodge a lunge for her - scalpel first.

"Keep the phone on, we can trace the signal and find you."

"Okay."

With that, she tossed the phone across the room and blocked the next attempt to stab her with the scalpel with her arm - couldn't fight back all that well with just one hand - then used her other arm to prevent him from grabbing her hair and pulling her any closer to him.

She didn't know how dangerous this was for the baby. If she was going to have to do anything that might hurt the baby too. But it couldn't be as bad as what he wanted to do, right? And they were both dead if she did nothing.

The following confrontation was complicated and uncertain and far from graceful. It was the kind of fighting that had no form or precision or grace. It looked more like a couple of children trying to hurt each other while not wanting to touch the other - though that was mostly on Willow's end of things.

She knew that Underhill found her abhorrent. The worst of the worst. To Underhill, she was the scum of society - a parasite.

She swallowed hard. "You attacked me at the party not because it was convenient but because you were angry I had the nerve to be pretty." It was rare she actually got to see these killers so closely - see their eyes. She met Stammets and the totem-pole builder, but most of the serial killers she profiled she never met in person. She just happened to be right so often.

This was so much different from that. She could see her deductions be acknowledged as correct from how his eyes changed - how the eyebrows moved to create facial expressions.

"You found me attractive, and that angers you.... You find many of your patients attractive, don't you? But it's different when they're good mothers, when they're high class and intelligent enough to know what bad parenting is. No, you didn't find any of your other targets attractive. They were as ugly to you as you believed them to be. But I had the nerve to be *pretty*."

His movements were becoming jerkier and easier to predict and avoid as she talked. She knew she was getting to him, making him angry - but his anger is what was betraying him.

"You can't understand why someone like Hannibal would let in someone like me. It had to be the baby, that was the only explanation. And I had to be using the baby to get my claws into your precious high class society. Right? I couldn't possibly care anything about the baby at all because it's all about me and how stupid I am and how low-class scum like me could never raise a baby properly. Right?"

She swallowed hard. "You had a close relationship with your mother and she formed all of your opinions about the world. She taught you what it means to be a good mother, and now you can't bare for her to be wrong. You're a real life Norman Bates. You focus on me and blame me for your own urges and thoughts and opinions when really you've never had anything in your head that wasn't your mother's first. You see yourself in all these unborn children, and you can't bare the thought of *you* having a bad mother."

Underhill lashed out at her - not at her baby bump, but at her face - and the scalpel sliced through her skin, cutting her cheek. She turned her head with the blow, to avoid the blade going through her cheek and creating a sloppy half Glasgow Smile.

She grabbed his hand - the one with the scalpel - then twisted his wrist, a breaking sound echoing through the warehouse, followed by his screams. The scalpel fell to the floor. As he caught his breath, Willow pulled her hand back, balled up in a fist, and punched him as hard as she could in the stomach. She couldn't really kick him at all due to her baby bump, but he fell to his knees in pain.

She was breathing a little hard, her mind sifting through the files in her brain, remembering how all of the killers she had profiled had killed.

After a moment, she walked away from him, as quickly as she could. She could hear sirens outside.

She found some building equipment - some thin metal pipes - and picked one up.

As she walked back towards him, she could see him reaching for the scalpel that he had dropped. She slammed the pipe right down on it, then pushed it farther away from him.

"There's one thing you really didn't take into account when you targeted me, Dr. Underhill."

Willow stared down at him, and he looked up at her.

"I think about killing people for a living."

She then bludgeoned him with the pipe. One swing. Two swings.

Three swings.

Four.

Five.

Six.

Seven.

Eight.

His blood was splattering over her clothes and the pavement and on her baby bump.

Nine.

She had to pause, to take a breath. Then

Ten.

Eleven.

Her arms were protesting, but she didn't want him to get back up.

Twelve.

There was a sickening *crack* and she finally stopped, letting the pipe fall to the floor. She looked down at him, breathing heavily and her body aching.

She then slowly walked back to where she had dropped her phone and picked it up.

"Willow?" Hannibal was saying into the phone, sounding as panicked as that man could sound.

"Hannibal," she breathed out.

"Willow, what happened? Are you all right?"

"He - he's definitely unconscious. I . . . I managed to disarm him and then hit him twelve times in the head with a piece of construction.... I still don't know where I am."

"I do, the warehouse is in my sights right now."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows. "I don't hear any sirens."

"Are you hurt at all?"

"A - a little, he cut my face, but other than that I'm fine - I, I should probably see a doctor, I don't know if - if anything I did to protect myself might've, might've - "

"We'll take care of it. I'm getting out of the car now and coming to you."

Willow sat down on top of a crate and looked around the warehouse.

She felt really tired now that the adrenaline was leaving her....

Had she killed Underhill?

She put her arm around her baby bump.

"It's going to be okay, Mischa.... Daddy's coming to get us, and everything is going to be fine...."

She was starting to zone out, to hallucinate again. Have a fit. She could feel it this time, see things change around her.

There was a hand on her shoulder, and she was coughing up bile, but she couldn't hear what was being said, couldn't see what was actually happening.

She could feel herself being half-carried to a car and placed in a seat. She heard the trunk door open, the heavy thunk of something being placed inside, the closing of the door, then someone coming into the car and getting into the passenger's seat. She moved her head over to see who it was....

She couldn't see much of anything, but Garrett Jacob Hobbs was not actually sitting next to her in the car.

"Willow?"

That was Hannibal's voice.

"Willow, I'm taking you to the hospital. If you can hear me, you're having a seizure. I'm placing this in your mouth so you don't bite your tongue. Right now the seat belt is what's keeping you from hurting yourself and the baby. We'll be able to check if the baby is all right once we're there."

Willow allowed Hannibal to place the soft, cottony substance in her mouth, but she could only see Garrett Jacob Hobbs.

Soon she passed out.

When she awoke, she found Jack standing beside her bed.

"Hey," she said, not bothering to sit up at all.

"The guards I gave you said you gave them the slip. Do you remember doing that?"

"No. I remember giving a lecture. Then I was in that warehouse...."

"With the Fetus Eater. Hannibal said you managed to call him and when he got there, the killer was gone and you were having a seizure."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows. That didn't sound right. But she didn't correct him.

"Were the police ever called?" Willow asked.

"Yes, after Hannibal reached the scene. He couldn't let himself wait for the ambulance to make sure you got medical care, though. Since he is a doctor, he managed to get you stabilized long enough so he could bring you here."

That sounded . . . odd. But Willow wasn't in a state of mind to question it all that much.

"So the Fetus Eater is alive?" Willow asked.

"As far as we know, yes."

That also didn't sound right....

But she said nothing about it. Jack told her to rest and that they were trying to figure out why she had a seizure. When a nurse came in, she was told that she was scheduled for a brain scan.

They found autoimmune encephalitis and she started treatment for it. There was quite the panic about it, considering her pregnancy, and it made Willow feel far too many things - fear, worry, even guilt - and she couldn't help but wonder.

Where was Hannibal?

Chesapeake Ripper

Chapter Summary

Joseph Underhill becomes the Chesapeake Ripper's next victim.

When Joseph Underhill came to, he was very much aware of how much pain he was in. He groaned and shifted up, reaching a hand up to touch the top of his head. He hissed sharply as it hurt to touch it. But the momentary feel of his head told him that there was indeed a dent in his head. It really did explain why there was *so much* pain.

He never had a victim fight back like that before. Oh, they did fight, but not so well.

He supposed that's how killers often fell. The last one had something about them that made them stand out. That made the police catch them.....

But now that he was looking around, this didn't look like a police station or a hospital.

He heard the clacking of shoes on tile and twisted his head around to see who it was who was walking towards him.

"H-hello?"

His eyes widened as Hannibal Lecter entered his line of sight.

"D-Dr. Lecter?"

"That was very rude. What you did to Willow. Very rude indeed."

"W-wha - ?"

Hannibal grabbed a knife from a counter - Underhill was realizing where it was he was exactly.

He was in a sanitation area. Like the kind of areas where people butcher pigs.

Hannibal walked closer to him, knife in hand.

"It wasn't just rude to Willow. It was rude to me." Hannibal stared down at him, eyes cold. "You tried to kill my girlfriend and my baby."

Underhill tried to push away from Hannibal, but he quickly found his back against a cabinet door.

Hannibal was covered in plastic tarp, protecting his suit and most of his body from any potential blood splatter.

Underhill realized there was going to be a lot of that.

Hannibal paused for a moment, but then he struck.

Underhill's mouth fell open in a silent scream as he felt the knife plunge deep into his gut. Sound was strangled in his throat and couldn't get out.

"No one attempts to murder my family," Hannibal said, his tone very understated compared to his actions. He twisted the knife, and Underhill could finally make a sound - a cry of pain. "No one attempts to sexually assault my family." He let go of the knife, stood up, then pulled out a meat cleaver. He then brought the cleaver down and buried it in Underhill's shoulder, slicing off Underhill's ear in the process. Underhill screamed. "No one hurts my family."

Hannibal then reached out for Underhill's opposite arm. He broke it at the elbow.

Underhill's screams echoed through the butcher room.

It was hours before Hannibal felt himself done. Technically the only thing he harvested were Underhill's penis and balls. There was a Spanish dish made from bull genitalia that he could pass it off as.

When he was done disposing of the evidence - putting it in a place where it would be found by the FBI, then placing the food where it belonged - he headed back to the hospital.

He wasn't allowed to see Willow right away, but once he was, he walked into her hospital room.

Willow saw him and managed a small smile.

"There you are."

Hannibal walked over to her bedside and took her hand into his.

"How are you feeling?"

Willow sniffed a little. "M-my fever was caused by - by autoimmune encephalitis. They're worried the - the baby won't be okay."

Hannibal placed a hand atop her head and petted her hair.

"It will be all right. I have faith that Misha will get better, as will you."

Willow's eyes sparkled with tears.

"I just want to have a healthy, live baby."

"I know. So do I."

He leaned down to kiss her forehead, and she let her eyes flutter closed.

Hannibal stayed by her side as long as he was allowed to for the rest of the day, and he visited her often while she was in the hospital.

Waiting

Chapter Summary

> Willow waits to leave the hospital. Jack finds Underhill's corpse and connects the murder to the Chesapeake Ripper.

Willow slept soundly in her hospital bed. It was really the only time she did not worry about what the doctors were going to say about the baby's health. There was talk of performing a C-section, and that was scary as well.

She felt like she hadn't thought through as many possibilities as she should have when she changed her mind about aborting the baby. What if it died anyway? What would the point have been then?

What if Hannibal asked her to leave if Mischa didn't live?

She did not voice her concerns aloud, for fear of sounding too fearful and weak.

Hannibal sat in the chair beside her bed, also falling asleep. Unlike with Abigail, his hand was not in Willow's. But he did not get up to leave her side and would not leave unless forced to do so by hospital staff.

Jack watched from the hospital room window, frowning. Beverly appeared by Jack's side and peered inside, crossing her arms.

"You're not gonna wake her up and tell her, are you? She's dealing with a lot right now."

"I know," Jack said. "I just - "

"Want to tell her for profiling's sake? She's not an agent right now, and she won't be until the baby is born. And they . . . the doctors haven't had good news to give. Let her worry about her own problems for a while."

"Dr. Underhill was murdered by the Chesapeake Ripper, I know it. I want to know her thoughts on the matter."

Beverly furrowed her eyebrows. "You think she saw who the Ripper is?"

"Maybe."

Beverly frowned a little bit.

"You're not thinking *she's* the Ripper, are you?"

Jack bit his lip.

"It has crossed my mind."

Beverly's eyebrows flew up.

"Wow."

Jack turned his head to look at her. "Don't judge me for that, she was the only one there and she can't remember."

"You think she hid a body while having a seizure and pregnant? That would've taken an incredible amount of effort. Hell, it would've required Dr. Lecter to help her with it."

"True. And Dr. Lecter is perfectly sane."

Beverly snorted.

"He is. He has lapses of judgement, but he is sane."

"That's a much more diplomatic position than you had at the dinner party."

"I've had time to think it over."

Beverly smirked.

"Whatever you say. But seriously, wait until she's well and not worried about her baby, okay? The extra stress might make everything worse. And imagine if she or Dr. Lecter blamed *you* for their dead baby. You'd probably never get another profile out of her ever again."

Jack weighed the possibility of such a thing.

"No, Willow would still do her job. But she would be far from happy and difficult to work with. You're right, I should hold off...."

Beverly snorted again and shook her head.

"I'm getting coffee. If she doesn't wake up in an hour, I'm heading back to work."

Beverly then walked down the hall. Jack continued to watch Hannibal and Willow doze off.

Onesie Shopping

Chapter Summary

Willow leaves the hospital; she and the other women go shopping for baby stuff.

It took a few weeks - almost a month - but Willow managed to conquer the brain infection. And the baby survived it as well. There was uncertainty as to how she contracted the infection, however. Most of those who came down with autoimmune encephalitis were young women of child-bearing age, but the occurrence of pregnancy in those cases were unheard of and some thought it impossible. There were various ways to contract the disease, and none of the doctors could really figure it out. One of the ways was by the consumption of human meat, but that was just so out in left field that no one even contemplated it.

Willow was finally let out of the hospital, and she went back home with Hannibal to rest for a while and return to teaching classes. She was happy to see the dogs again. Winston had really missed her and refused to leave her side.

Hannibal didn't think he'd ever understand why someone would be so non-bothered by a dog watching them urinate or defecate. Willow had no explanation she could possibly give him outside of a simple shrug of her shoulders.

The closer the due date for the baby's birth came, the more Abigail started to hang around the house. She was even helping with furnishing the baby's room, which also had a bed for Abigail in case Abigail for some reason needed to spend the night with the baby. There was still a waiting period to see if Willow's mental health issues were all caused by the encephalitis - Dr. Du Maurier recommended at least a two-month period of monitoring her symptoms - so Abigail was still employed, and part of Willow was very unsure if she'd actually be able to properly take care of the child even if she really had stopped hallucinating and blacking out. She had no confidence in her ability to raise a child, so she was more than all right with letting Abigail take the reigns.

One day, Willow and Abigail went out with Beverly, Alana, and Bella Crawford to shop for various things for the child. She and Hannibal had already gotten the absolute necessities - crib, bottles, stuff like that - but there were other things like what color the room should be, what spinning mobile it should have, if there should be a cute little theme for the nursery, and other stuff that needed to be thought about and shopped for.

"Thank you for taking the time to come with us, Mrs. Crawford. I know you've been very busy," Willow said softly as they walked through the store. She wasn't looking at Bella but at all the different things around them. She chewed at her bottom lip, eyes darting from one thing to another nervously.

Bella watched her survey the store, eyebrows slightly furrowed and a frown tugging at her lips.

"Don't mention it. Jack has told me a lot about you, and I was hoping to spend some time with you anyway. And I'll never get to do this kind of shopping for myself, so it's nice to get the experience."

Willow managed a half-smile.

"Glad I can help, then."

"Are you feeling all right?"

Willow turned her head towards Bella to acknowledge that she heard her, then continued to look around the store.

"I'm remembering why I initially had such a strong adverse reaction to the idea of having a child."

Bella's frown deepened.

"And why is that?"

"There's a big chance that it's going to be like me, and I don't necessarily enjoy being on the spectrum. Depending on if or where on the spectrum she is, a lot of stuff in here might not be conducive to her mental development and might only serve to irritate her, and then we just have a mini-me, and no one wants that."

"You're autistic?"

Willow made a face and shrugged.

"Closer to autistic than not, but it's not quite the right word. I guess you could say it's the most accurate term that most people can understand...."

Abigail, Alana, and Beverly were farther down the aisle, Abigail and Beverly getting pretty into looking at the different baby toys and onesies. Beverly picked one up and held it up, looking back at Willow and Bella.

"You should totally get this one for her," Beverly said. The onsie was white with one of those fake ties that are printed onto a shirt on it. Except for being a solid color, the tie was multi-colored and had pictures of guitars on it. Willow managed a smile at it.

"That's cute."

"So would go with Hannibal's ugly ties."

Willow cracked up with a bit of laughter. Abigail snorted, and Alana tried not to smile too big.

"Oh! There's this one!" Abigail held one up that read "FBI: Fabulously Beautiful Infant."

"And plenty of baby formal wear onsies," Alana added, holding up a couple onesies that were printed to give off the impression that they were suits with bow ties.

It was difficult to not smile at how cute it all was, but Willow still had some of her concerns from before.

Her eyes landed on a onesie that was decorated with puppies, and that made the other women laugh at how predictable it was.

After picking out what was probably too many onesies and Abigail insisting on getting a mobile with different woodland creatures hanging from it (including deer) because "there is such a thing as too many dogs, Agent Graham," they took a break to have lunch. Which, considering it was just them girls and most of them had no reservations on talking about whatever could come to mind, brought up some interesting conversations.

"So Willow, if you don't mind me asking," Beverly said as the conversation trailed into love and sex lives, Abigail growing quieter as the topics became things she had no experience with. "what *is* it like having sex with Dr. Lecter?"

Alana choked temporarily on the food she had just put in her mouth. Bella did not stop drinking her water, pretending nothing had been said. Abigail blushed and tried not to giggle.

Willow took a moment to swallow her food, then took a deep breath.

"Well, we only have had intercourse once," she said, gesturing towards her ever-growing baby bump. "And considering this is me we're talking about, it's very probable that it could've been a lot better, but . . . taking past experiences with sex into account, it's the best *I've* ever had. What with actual consideration into how I felt about it and making sure my consent was taken into account."

Willow didn't realize how that might sound until after she had said it and seeing how awkward the following silence became. It was mostly Alana's expression that tipped her off because suddenly she looked sad.

"I'm sorry, I meant that - before Dr. Lecter, there was only one person during my college years, and there was some arguing over the relevance of safe words, and I was a push-over and agreed to stuff I otherwise wouldn't have, it wasn't ever outright rape or anything, just situations that built up increasing amounts of resentment until we broke up and I graduated."

Willow had no idea if that smoothed it over at all, but -

"Safe words?" Abigail asked. "As in . . . BDSM safe words?"

Willow nodded. Alana looked like someone had dropped her into the Twilight Zone and she was having trouble adjusting. Beverly's eyes widened in surprise, but her mouth quirked up as though impressed.

"Really? You? Into BDSM?"

"Oddly enough, not really. The appeal to the relationship was being told what to do so I couldn't screw up, and she was very good at giving orders. But not so good at listening."

"She?" Alana said, covering her mouth so not to be rude while talking with her mouth full, and her eyes about as wide as they could get out of shock.

"You like women?" Beverly asked. Willow nodded. "Cool. That mean you're bisexual?"

Willow nodded again.

"What does that mean?" Abigail asked. Willow was a little taken aback at first, but she didn't mind the question.

"It means I'm attracted to both men and women."

Abigail made a little movement with her mouth, as though she was silently saying the word "oh." Then she furrowed her eyebrows.

"How'd you know?"

Willow shrugged.

"It wasn't something I knew all along, but in my teens, I noticed that I was equally frustrated by the fact that I was never going to get pretty girls or boys to give me the time of day, because even if I could make myself be conventionally attractive, no one wants to be in a relationship with someone who has issues with eye contact, social interaction, and physical contact, especially not in high school. It just sort of . . . was the case one day."

Abigail seemed to process and find peace with that information.

Beverly was smirking like a fox.

"So what kinds of women do you like?"

Willow's mouth twitched upward.

"Well, I'm starting to think I'm developing a therapist fetish, because Dr. Du Maurier is the hottest woman I have ever seen. Very femme, great hair, make-up, and clothes, and makes wine-drinking look incredibly sexy."

Alana simply put her fork down and didn't look like she'd be picking it up to continue to eat until they changed the subject. Beverly was laughing.

"That's hilarious," Beverly admitted.

"Femme?" Abigail asked.

"Short for feminine - there's butch and femme, butch being really masculine women, femme meaning very feminine," Willow explained, then actually looking Beverly in the eye, continued, "Hannibal and I actually talked about it, and he admitted that if Dr. Du Maurier

wasn't so professional, he'd totally breach the subject of us having a threeway. But Dr. Du Maurier sees both of us now, and, as Hannibal put it, 'is more professional than anyone' so she'd never go for it."

"Threesome?" Alana managed to say - the first thing she'd really said since the conversation started. She sounded mildly horrified, though it was unclear as to why.

"How would that work if - ?" Bella interjected.

Knowing that the question was about her being on the spectrum and thus having issues with touching and other things, Willow went ahead and answered. "There's certain things that freak me out and make it difficult for me to do certain things, but there are others that I can do and if it's a nice, controlled environment, I can be eased into most things. Unfortunately for Hannibal, blowjobs aren't one of them. But he doesn't seem at all bothered by that. He focuses on me the whole time anyway."

Abigail was bright red in the face, but she was smiling and might have been attempting to push down the giggles.

"And how does he do that?" Abigail asked, after gathering up the courage to do so.

"Abigail!" Alana half-whispered.

"A lot of oral," Willow admitted.

That made Alana, Beverly, and Bella all look surprised - and impressed.

"Really?" Alana asked, seemingly forgetting about how scandalized she was feeling about the whole conversation.

"Dr. Lecter likes giving oral?" Beverly said, her smirk widening slightly.

"I've given up on getting Jack to do that," Bella admitted, eating like they weren't talking about sex habits but what had been playing at the opera or something high class and looking royal and fabulous while doing it.

Willow nodded.

"Honestly, it's the best experience I've had getting eaten out ever. He listens and remembers about what I said did and didn't feel good - "

"Any way I can get in on this threesome thing?" Beverly interrupted.

Willow, Abigail, and Bella all laughed, and Alana tried not to but she was smiling pretty widely by this point.

"Maybe," Willow said, and meaning it. Beverly was a very attractive woman, and she did like Beverly a lot, though it had been pretty platonic on Willow's end. But it was just sex, not a romantic relationship. People could have sex just because. "If you're serious, I'll ask."

"Hell yeah, I'm serious," Beverly said. "I'm not into women, but damn, I'll try anything once."

Abigail was growing more courageous with this topic. "Anyone else you two have talked about having sex with?"

Willow paused. "Yes, but I'm not so sure she'd be comfortable with the idea that we thought about it at all...."

"But you told us about Dr. Du Maurier," Abigail pointed out.

Willow bit at her lower lip, her eyes darting to Alana.

Alana blushed heavily and suddenly started to eat and eat a lot.

"Anything else Dr. Lecter's good at?" Beverly prompted, somewhat changing the subject.

Willow laughed, rather amused by how popular the topic of Hannibal in bed was. But she was unsure how much she really wanted to indulge with them, outside of what she just said. She wasn't embarrassed by any of it, but some of what Hannibal would do was a little strange. Like, she didn't get what his fascination with using his teeth against her skin or nibbling at her ear was about. Or why he enjoyed suckling at her tits like the baby probably would be doing soon enough. Though she supposed it gave her practice for breast-feeding.

She would never complain about it though. It wasn't that she disliked it. She did like the feeling of his tongue on her skin, of the feel of his teeth against her flesh, of how he would kiss her bony places. The way he'd use his tongue on her clit was incredible....

"If I could describe Hannibal's way of making love in one word," Willow said, as a way of compromise, "it would be that he enjoys worshiping the body."

Birthday

Chapter Summary

The baby is ready to be born.

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas! Are you taking part in the Holiday Hannibinge?

Hannibal, Willow, and Abigail had fallen into an interesting arrangement. Despite the baby not having been born yet, Abigail now visited a lot. She and Hannibal went over various things about how the baby's schedule was going to be like - how old it would be when it would need its feedings and sleeping to be regulated and other things like that. Willow, on the other hand, took care of actually putting the room together. She allowed them to help if she felt like she needed it, but for the most part, Willow took charge of the painting of the room and setting up the woodland-creatures mobile and a variety of other things. She was still a girl from Virginia who had gone fishing with her mother and learned how to build things and do carpentry in high school because she'd rather die than take home economics.

It was after a long day of setting up the baby's room just so and sitting down for dinner with Hannibal and Abigail that she started feeling the pain. At first, she just figured that it was a cramp of some sort or the baby kicking especially hard. But the pain grew, and she squeezed her eyes shut tightly.

"Willow?" Hannibal asked, letting go of the plate he had just set onto the table. She felt Abigail's hand on her shoulder.

"The - the baby, I - "

And then her water broke, soaking her underwear and legs.

The pain was unbearable. She could barely concentrate on anything else. She couldn't keep track of what was happening around her, other than that Abigail and Hannibal were close by at all times. At some point, she was placed in an ambulance, and at some point, she reached a hospital. She was still in pain, and she was crying and screaming. She could hear the doctor telling her to push, and she was trying, but it hurt so bad, and where the hell was a pain killer, surely there was one, please let her have one, this was unbearable - !

She felt a hand touching her forehead, brushing her hair back, and she peered through what she realized were tears and saw Hannibal looking down at her. He didn't say anything, only looked at her, and it was difficult to read his expression. She wasn't particularly comforted by it in the least, but she wasn't really thinking about him at all.

"Pain med - please - !"

"You have to keep pushing, ma'am!"

Willow let loose one more scream, and the crying of a baby entered the cacophony.

"All right, great job, just keep pushing, he's almost out!"

Willow tried to breathe, and she saw Hannibal's smile, and he moved the hand on her forehead so he was more petting her hair than keeping it back.

Willow kept pushing and pushing until the baby was out, and her throat hurt from the screaming and crying, and the baby was crying too, and it was too noisy, too - too -

"Leave me alone," Willow asked. "Leave me alone, please."

She felt Hannibal's hand leave her forehead, and the voices of the doctor and whoever else was there faded into the background as she closed her eyes and just tried to will the pain and the sensory overload away. It could all just go away....

Willow was taken to a room where she could rest and have her vitals looked after, and Hannibal and the baby were taken to the nursery, where the baby could be cleaned and given a bed with a heat lamp. But the baby was a very healthy baby girl.

As per Willow's request, Hannibal left her alone and told Abigail to do the same. So instead of being by Willow's side, they stayed with Mischa.

When the nurses ushered them out of the nursery so they could take care of things for the baby's health, Abigail borrowed Hannibal's cell.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Dr. Bloom. Willow had her baby. It's a girl and very healthy, as far as the doctors can tell."

"That's great! I'll be right there."

"Okay. Will it just be you?"

"Uh, this time, it will be, but I can bring other friends of Willow's at a later time."

"That sounds good. See you in a bit."

Abigail and Alana then hung up, and Abigail rejoined Hannibal by the window, looking in at little Mischa Lecter.

Hannibal's smile was far more wide and more genuine than anyone had ever seen it before.

Alana arrived, but no one was allowed in to the room to see Willow. She was asleep, and the doctors said that the actual birthing was quite difficult for her, so that she needed her rest. Alana asked further questions about the procedure and -

"What do you mean she did it without an epidural!?"

"It was in her medical charts that she didn't want to receive one."

"*What?* Are you sure? That really doesn't sound like her."

Hannibal watched as Alana essentially chewed the doctors out. He kept his hands behind his back and just watched. Abigail stood next to him, in a similar stance, but looked up at Hannibal curiously.

In a very low voice, Abigail asked, "How come you're not asking them these questions?"

Hannibal glanced at her, then let his eyes return to watching Alana fighting with the doctors.

"Because I'm the one who put it in her paperwork," Hannibal said just as quietly. They were not overheard due to Alana's volume.

"Oh." Abigail didn't respond in a particularly shocked manner - just mildly surprised. "How come?"

"I think Willow's opinion that she is unfit to be a mother is entirely correct. This way, it'll be easier for her to accept any aversion to the child, and you will be able to take care of Mischa and raise her as her caretaker alongside me."

Abigail furrowed her eyebrows. "You're trying to take Willow out of the picture?"

That made Hannibal shift himself towards Abigail to look at her more directly.

"No. I want Willow in my life and in the child's life. But I do not think it would be wise to allow her to influence Mischa too much. Willow has a very particular way of thinking about things, and I do not think that it would be in Mischa's best interests to follow in her footsteps. Do you understand?"

"I think so. But if Willow is on the spectrum - like, autism and stuff - isn't that genetic? What if Mischa is autistic or whatever? Wouldn't that make being like Willow a default setting?"

"I do not think any autism or Asperger's or any other sensory disorder would be the source of being hindered. It would simply be our job to give Mischa the tools she'll need to maneuver the world in a way that would make it a non-obstacle. It is something that Willow has not mastered and is, perhaps, too stubborn to learn for herself. I wouldn't want that stubbornness to affect Mischa's development."

Abigail thought about it for a bit. "I guess that makes sense." It wasn't like Abigail actually *knew* anything about autism or the spectrum or anything like that. And Hannibal *was* the

doctor here. Surely he knew about that stuff a lot more than she did. "So . . . because the birthing hurt so much, she'll be adverse to being with Mischa, at least at first, and will keep her distance when it's most important for the baby to bond with the mother, and so as Mischa grows up, she'll be less likely to want to be overly attached to Willow and be attached to you instead. That right?"

"And attached to you as well."

Abigail smiled a little bit.

"Glad we're on the same page," she replied.

"As am I."

At that moment, Alana was successfully scaring all the doctors to the point where they'd pretty much do whatever she wanted them to do to just get her to leave them alone. Alana was very handy, that way.

When the nurses tried to get Willow to hold the baby over the next few days, Willow absolutely refused, with no explanation, and also refused to see Hannibal or Abigail or Alana or Jack or anybody. When she (and Mischa) left the hospital, she still hadn't held her and hadn't really looked at anyone. Hannibal went with it in stride and accommodated her decision to not interact. For the most part.

While Willow sat in the middle and under a pile of dogs - Wiston in her lap and the other surrounding her and acting as breathing furry pillows - Hannibal approached her and knocked on the door. Willow jerked her head up, in much the same fashion as the dogs surrounding her did.

"You will need to make an appointment with Dr. Du Maurier. To talk about how you're feeling about the birth and the baby and in general. She called about wanting to see you within the next month."

She just stared at him.

"Willow, did you hear me?"

She nodded, then lowered her head again.

Hannibal then left her to her own devices, returning to Abigail and Mischa, Abigail feeding Mischa with a bottle.

Strange Seeing You Here

Chapter Summary

Willow becomes scared of herself and turns to an unlikely person for comfort.

Chapter Notes

If you were missing the sex from the first chapter, well, there's certainly sex in this one.

Willow eventually started going back to work, but it was obvious she was on autopilot for most of the time.

Jack was concerned for her. Alana was concerned. Beverly, Jimmy, even Brian.

Hannibal kept an eye on her, but any concerns he had were not voiced.

But then again, she lied about making new appointments with Dr. Du Maurier.

Oh, she made one. One.

But. . . .

"So you don't know why you weren't given a sedative during the birthing process?" Dr. Du Maurier asked.

Willow shook her head.

"Has there been an investigation of some sort into it? One would think there would be grounds to sue."

"Alana . . . was very loud about it. I could hear her from my hospital room. But apparently it was in my file. I don't remember putting it there."

"Perhaps it had been tampered with. Or they mistook your files for someone else's."

Willow swallowed.

"Willow, how do you feel about the baby?"

She shut her eyes and tried not to scream. She managed to swallow it down.

"I don't want to talk about the baby."

She felt like screaming. She wanted to scream so much.

"We'll have to talk about the baby at some point. Better sooner rather than later. When things might be too frightening for you to look at them."

"It's frightening right now."

"How come?"

"I don't want to think about it. Or hear it or look at it...."

"Is the child of indeterminate gender?"

". . . No. It's a girl. We named it Mischa. After Hannibal's dead sister."

"Then why do you still refer to her as an it?"

Willow found she could not open her mouth to speak. She remained silent for the rest of the session.

She hadn't made a new one.

She didn't want to make a new one.

She didn't want to talk about it.

But she could hear it crying at night, could hear Abigail attending to its needs. She was reminded of its needs every time she had to hook herself up to the milk pump, so the baby would have breast milk to drink....

She just didn't want anything to do with it. And to an extent, that scared her. But she couldn't talk about it with Hannibal. Or Abigail. Or heaven forbid Jack.... She couldn't bring herself to talk about it to Dr. Du Maurier or Alana or Beverly.... It was a laughable thought to think she could turn to Brian Zeller or Jimmy Price. And . . . she didn't really know anyone else. She wasn't close to anyone other than....

What was she going to do? She hadn't truly set eyes on her own child since she had birthed it. Hadn't held it.... Hannibal hadn't forced her too, and neither did Abigail. They seemed to be perfectly content with letting her distance herself from it....

But . . . why? Why did they seem to think that was fine?

Did . . . did they think she'd hurt the baby otherwise?

That thought made her panic. But it also told her who she could talk to.

A man who had killed his wife and daughter. She'd be able to learn if that was plausible, with how she felt, in comparison to how he felt when he killed them in a blind rage.

So a badge flash to some lower-level psyche ward personnel who recognized her from before and some security clearance later - after lying to Hannibal about where she was going (he thought she was with Dr. Du Maurier again) - and she was face to face with Abel Gideon.

Abel Gideon peered at her curiously.

"Didn't expect to see you again, Agent Graham. Not after they determined I wasn't the Chesapeake Ripper. Did you hear that I'm suing Dr. Chilton?"

"Yes. I did. I'm not here about that, however."

"Oh? What are you here for then? I'm not claiming to be any other on-the-loose killer."

"No, I'm here to ask some questions about the murders of your wife and daughter."

Gideon furrowed his eyebrows.

"Why?"

She took a deep breath.

"I feel like you're the only one who can help me solve this . . . situation that I've acquired."

Gideon continued to look at her with some suspicion.

"You're coming to me for help on a case? Has that been cleared by your superiors?"

Willow laughed a little. "No, there - there's no case. I - " Ah, what the hell. "I became pregnant and gave birth in between now and when I last saw you. I'm . . . concerned about how detached I am from her. I was wondering if that was what you had felt towards your own child...."

Gideon stared at her for a few moments, almost as though he was very curious about her.

"No one has ever bothered to ask that. Not someone who wasn't paid to psycho-analyze me and already had an agenda. Everyone just assumes that you're some kind of inhuman scumbag."

Willow shrugged. "It's not that you're not a scumbag. I'm concerned I'm a scumbag too."

Gideon chuckled.

"Well, Agent Graham, I didn't start out hating them. I loved them both quite a bit at first. But as time wore on, they just became . . . so infuriating and annoying. To the point where I just . . . couldn't do it anymore. My love for them couldn't outweigh my hatred. Do you have your child, Agent Graham?"

Willow swallowed. "I don't know."

Gideon raised an eyebrow.

"What do you feel when you hear her crying?"

That she didn't have to think about. "Pain. I feel the ghosts of the pain I felt when I pushed it out of me.... And it hurts more than I can bare."

Gideon grunted slightly. "No, I never felt pain. Just anger. Like I had wasted my time. Do you feel like you've wasted your time?"

Willow shook her head.

"Like you've made a mistake?"

She nodded, and she could feel the tears welling in her eyes, for the first time since she gave birth.

"Is there a Mr. Graham?"

"No. I - Graham would be my maiden name, if I were married. The father is a Dr. Lecter. A psychiatrist."

"Ew."

Willow let out a breathless laugh.

"This suddenly makes a lot more sense, you coming here."

Willow laughed more.

"Do you feel resentful of him? This Dr. Lecter?"

She shook her head. "No. I . . . I feel like I've let him down. Somehow. Though he seems . . . more than content to let me stew in my pain, as long as it means he gets to spend time with the baby...."

Gideon's expression took a turn for the particularly interested.

"Did you feel pressured to have the baby?"

"No, quite the opposite. He was very supportive of me making my own decision."

"But now that she's born, he prefers her over you?"

Willow bit her lip.

"I don't think that's the case. I mean, I do still see him. Sometimes. And I am the one who demanded to be left alone...."

"Agent Graham, he's a psychiatrist. I highly doubt his training would instruct him to just leave you alone. Unless that what he wants you to do."

She shrugged. "He thinks I'm seeing my actual therapist right now."

"Naturally I make a much better option."

"You I'm actually able to talk to. You can't judge me."

"That is true."

They watched each other for a few moments.

"Do you think about killing the baby?"

"Sometimes."

"Does the thought make you happy?"

"No."

"Then you are nothing like me, Agent Graham. You're just a woman who experienced a trauma and is being left to dry."

A silence hung in the air, but it wasn't filled with any tension. Just pensiveness.

Willow furrowed her eyebrows.

"Why would he leave me out to dry?"

"Why would he want the baby all to himself?" Gideon responded.

She looked up at him, her confusion evident on his face. "It doesn't make sense."

"I'll take your word for it."

"Maybe he just doesn't know how to handle it and is hoping Dr. Du Maurier can make it all better. She's his therapist too and he thinks very highly of her."

"And yet you're talking to the convicted murderer instead."

A couple moments passed, then Willow laughed - much livelier than before. Gideon snorted, then found himself laughing with her.

"You're very peculiar, Agent Graham."

"Yeah, it's why Jack hired me."

"Oh?"

"I'm apparently far more capable of empathy than the entire FBI and thus can understand how serial killers think and feel. Thus, using the evidence presented at a crime scene, I can determine where the killer will be, who they are, what they might look like. That kind of thing."

"That's why you're involved with the Chesapeake Ripper case."

"Yes, yes it is."

"You're very attractive, Agent Graham."

Willow's smile dropped. She swallowed hard and lowered her eyes, breaking the small bits of eye contact she had had with Gideon.

"Does this Dr. Lecter pay much attention to you?"

"I'm not discussing him with you."

"But you discussed with me about your baby. And you clearly aren't talking to your therapist."

"You just hit on me."

"And yet you're not just telling me goodbye. You have your answer about whether or not you're a baby killer, I've hit on you, and you're still here."

Willow furrowed her eyebrows.

"You're enjoying this time with me, Agent Graham. Do you enjoy your time with your Dr. Lecter?"

She didn't know whether to shake her head or to roll her eyes or just scoff in general. "You're just horny. I heard about how you talked to Dr. Bloom. You haven't had sex since you got locked up and are just working off pent-up urges."

"That's different."

"Oh?"

"Dr. Bloom is just physically attractive."

Willow snorted. "Oh? Then what am I?"

"A woman I wouldn't have murdered."

Willow had absolutely no response for that. She stood there, somewhat stunned and somewhat skeptical. In the end, she just swallowed and gave him a look that called out bullshit.

"Goodbye, Dr. Gideon."

She started walking away.

Gideon shouted after her, "You can bet on me masturbating to thoughts of pounding your pussy, Agent Graham! Or would you rather I sodomize you?"

Her only response was the clanging of the door as she left and headed for the elevator.

When she returned home, instead of going straight to her bedroom to sequester herself away with the dogs, she looked for Hannibal.

He was fixing dinner and looked somewhat surprised to see her.

"How did it go?" he asked.

She managed a small smile.

"I feel better."

Hannibal smiled back.

"Good. Dinner will take about an hour to cook, so I hope you're not starving. There are some appetizers I could whip up if you are."

Willow shook her head. "No, not starving." She walked up to him and gently took his tie into her hand. Without looking him in the eye, she added, "Not for food."

Hannibal's eyebrows rose.

"Is there something else I can help you with?"

Willow bit her lip, but her mouth was turned upward some.

"Do you think your condoms will work this time?"

"I believe so. I can double up, just to be on the safe side. Was there anything specifically that you had in mind?"

Willow blushed deeply as she contemplated actually saying it out loud.

"Would you be scandalized if I asked to be taken on the floor doggie-style?"

There was a pause.

"I'm - surprised, but certainly not scandalized. If that is what you'd like. I'll meet you in my room, and I'll let Abigail know about the food, in case we take longer."

Willow pulled gently on Hannibal's tie and kissed him on the lips - the first real contact they'd had in weeks - then kept her head down as she left the room, shooting him a glance before heading to Hannibal's room.

Hannibal had absolutely no idea what had gotten into her. But fantasies he knew couldn't have been real entertained him during the moments it took to finish the dish, put it in the oven, inform Abigail about the food and that he and Willow shouldn't be disturbed for a while, and walk down the hall towards his room. Fantasies of Bedelia exploring Willow's body, curling her fingers into her vaginal opening and teasing her into feeling better, pressing kisses on her temple, face, and neck, telling her how beautiful she was. Telling her to go to

Hannibal for this and then tell her all about it in great detail about how Hannibal felt inside of her.

But Hannibal knew that wasn't real. It didn't disappoint him either. He just liked the idea of Bedelia sharing his pet with him.

When Hannibal entered the room, Willow had already pushed her jeans down and kicked them away from her and had just finished taking her socks off and tossing them towards where her pants now lay. Hannibal helped her with her shirt, bra, and underwear, then let her position herself as he positioned himself behind her.

For foreplay, Hannibal ate her out and teased her breasts, his cock slowly growing erect. More than anything else, her submissiveness and the taste of her skin and fluids turned him on the most. It was different from how he ate his victims. This was more of a form of worship. A reward for submitting to him.

As Willow became a mewling mess in his arms, Hannibal took out the condoms and rolled two of them on - just to make sure - then took his fingers and played with her labia and clitoris to get her vagina to secrete more fluid. He then inserted his erection into her soft, warm, fleshy cavern and slowly moved back and forth.

Willow closed her eyes and focused on the feeling of the intrusion into her body. She bit her lip, not entirely believing what she wanted to ask, but after a while she let the words fall from her mouth - "Harder, *please*" - and Hannibal steadily gave her what she asked for, though not all at once. But without any requests to stop, Hannibal continued to thrust, each one harder than the thrust before it. The stabbing into her cervix hurt, and yet she craved it. It was pleasurable, but also felt like a punishment.

She allowed herself to imagine it was Gideon pushing himself inside of her. Maybe it was wrong of her, but . . . .

But part of her felt like Gideon had a point about Hannibal. Maybe it was a quiet sort of revenge that Hannibal would never know of....

By the time that Hannibal came inside the condoms, Willow decided that she really didn't like what Gideon had suggested. But it was good to get it out of her system.

And the sex got Hannibal to smile at her again.

Abigail grinned at them knowingly when they all sat down for the delicious dinner together.

Bet You Thought You Heard the Last of Me

Chapter Summary

> Willow continues to meet with Gideon. Chilton brings it to Jack's and Hannibal's attention. Matthew Brown brings attention to himself.

Chilton didn't even realize that Willow was entering his mental hospital to visit Gideon until it was brought to his attention by a member of his security team. He raised an eyebrow at the footage that was being shown to him.

"How long ago was this?" Chilton asked.

"Yesterday, Dr. Chilton."

"Was this the only time?"

"No, sir. There are two other videos of their visit."

"Bring this and those two videos to my office please."

"Yes, sir."

Chilton then watched the videos on his personal television and VCR/DVD player - old, yes, but he appreciated the vintage quality. He viewed their first discussion, his eyebrows raising as he listened to Gideon and Willow's first exchange regarding her baby, her worry that she was going to kill the child, and then Gideon hitting on Agent Graham. He took the disc out when Willow exited the shot, then put in the next disc.

"You're back."

"I am."

"Why?"

"I still can't look at it."

"The baby?"

"Yes."

"Ah. And the reason you're telling me is - ?"

"When it's six months old, we'll be able to potentially pick up signs on whether or not it's autistic like me. When I was six months old, I started exhibiting behavior. Said behavior made

my father abandon my mother and me. She hasn't let me live it down."

"I wasn't aware you were autistic."

"I am."

"Ah. That explains a lot actually."

Willow made an expression Chilton couldn't see very well.

"So you're concerned that Dr. Lecter will change his mind about the baby if she's an autistic baby?"

"No. I know he won't. I can't be for certain if that makes me feel better."

"Why wouldn't it?"

"Because I'm confused."

"On what?"

"On what Dr. Lecter really wants from this."

"Oh?"

Chilton watched as Willow approached Gideon's bars.

"Despite having returned to spending time with him and the baby's nanny, neither of them have encouraged me holding the baby or talking to the baby or doing anything for it outside of pumping out breast milk for it. There's even moments where I think Hannibal would rather I associate the sensation of having my tits sucked with sex with him as opposed to giving lifeblood to our child."

"Agent Graham, did you just admit to me that your not-husband has a breast-feeding kink?"

"I suppose I have."

"Psychiatrists are gross."

"Heh. Anyway, I . . . I'm doubtful on whether or not I'm even . . . wanted in the house anymore. They haven't been rejecting me, but they just seem like . . . they'd be happier if it was just the two of them."

"The doctor and the nanny?"

"Mm-hm."

"You think they're having an affair?"

"What? No! She's much too young for him. But they seem to . . . enjoy each other's company just fine. Without me. With the baby."

Chilton watched as Gideon and Willow stood in silence for a few moments.

"I'm not jealous, I just . . . want to be part of the baby's life too, but I haven't . . . made the bridge I need to make, and . . . neither of them are interested in helping."

"Hm. That is rather suspicious. But doesn't necessarily mean anything other than they're ableist pricks. Maybe they just think an autistic woman such as yourself can't take care of a baby."

"I . . . I can't take care of a baby. I just . . . I would like to learn how to spend time with it in a way that is good for both of us. I don't . . . want to be a stranger to my own child...."

"That's perfectly understandable, Agent Graham. Have you tried to talk to this Dr. Lecter about it?"

Willow shook her head.

"Maybe you should give it a try. I mean, I already think he's a disgusting piece of crap, but if you want to keep the little family unit, communication is key."

"Right."

There was some hesitation between them, Willow not walking away and Gideon simply looking at her.

"Why are you back, Agent Graham?"

". . . I'm not sure. I just . . . feel like I can't trust Dr. Du Maurier with this. Not with her relationship with Hannibal."

"Ah. So the psychopath in the mental hospital makes the best alternative."

"It's either you or Dr. Bloom. Who also is friends with Hannibal. More than she is with me.... You make fun of it, but you kind of ARE my only option here. God forbid I confide to Chilton."

"Ew. You're right, I am the better option."

Willow laughed first, and Chilton could tell Gideon was smiling. Chilton's eyebrows furrowed. The rest of their conversation was mostly inconsequential, but the fact that Gideon seemed to be wrapping the special FBI agent around his finger was concerning.

He took out the second disc and put in the third one. Again, it was Willow and Gideon, though one of the nurses - Matthew Brown, Chilton remembered his name was - hung back just in view of the camera.

"I'm starting to expect these visits, Agent Graham. And you got dressed up! You're spoiling me."

"Well, it's not like you get much else while sitting in here."

"Ha ha. So what's the sitch?"

"Was that a Kim Possible reference?"

"Shush."

Willow laughed, and Chilton found himself snorting with her.

"I talked to Hannibal, and he says that he is willing to help me connect with Mischa. Our nanny has no objections, but I did accidentally find her journal. She fancies Dr. Lecter, apparently."

"Oooh, reading other women's diaries? How naughty of you."

"It was an accident. Honest."

"Sure it was."

"I can't say I mind, though."

"Oh?"

Willow shook her head.

"She's a good girl, and he's a very attractive man."

"So you trust them."

"Very much."

"Hm. And yet all the grief that makes you coming back to me."

"Well, that's just my fault, now isn't it?"

"You seem rather happy today, Agent Graham."

"Do I? Perhaps I'm here just to visit."

"Now you're just teasing me."

"Perhaps."

"Ouch!"

She laughed, and Chilton saw Nurse Brown smirk in the background.

"So is there any progress with the baby, Agent Graham?"

"Not yet. We haven't started yet. I've been busy with classes - finals coming up - and he's been . . . preoccupied."

"I see.... Well, do tell me what happens with that. I'm genuinely interested."

"Do you have a bet on what the outcome will be?"

"Whatever makes you say that?"

"You have a very specific interpretation of my child's father and probably want to be proved right."

Chilton could make out that Gideon looked thoughtful.

"Would you believe me if I said my curiosity in the conclusions you come to are not entirely from a selfish place?"

"No," Chilton muttered to himself.

"No," Willow answered. "Unless of course you gave me a reason to believe that they did."

"Well, I didn't say they weren't selfish...."

"But?"

Gideon didn't respond to Willow, and it made Chilton's concerns grow. The last thing he needed was a patient successfully developing attachments to an FBI agent.

Chilton gave that idea a further bit of thought, then actually changed his mind. It could come in handy, actually.

The rest of that disc wasn't all that interesting. Willow left soon after Gideon stopped talking, and Nurse Brown took her away. Chilton did notice the encroaching hand towards the small of her back, but they moved out of the camera shot and Chilton didn't care *that* much about it.

The third video was a few weeks after the second one, but it was yesterday, and thus far more recent and relevant. Chilton popped it in and waited for the picture to come up.

He furrowed his eyebrows as he watched Willow enter the picture, walk right in front of Gideon's cell. Was she crying?

"Agent Graham?"

"I can't do it. I can't, I can't - !"

"Slow down, Agent Graham. Take a deep breath. Then tell me what happened. Okay?"

Willow started pacing, though she seemed to be following Gideon's instructions. She was wearing her plaid and jeans again and wore no make-up and her hair was a mess - an attractive mess, but a mess. Nurse Brown once again was just in the fringes of the picture.

She slowed to a stop, and Chilton turned the volume up slightly.

"I can't hold the baby, I can't."

"What happened?"

"Hannibal - Hannibal tried to coach me on how to properly hold her and - and I was doing all right at first. And I was starting to help feed her with the bottle. B-but - !"

Chilton straightened up a little in his chair. What was he listening to . . . exactly?

He watched as Gideon came closer to the glass wall and put his hand against the glass, his only way of trying to reach out to her physically to . . . offer comfort?

"Is she alive?"

"Y-yes, she's alive, she - I just - !"

"Take your time...."

And she did, and Chilton waited a while before pressing the fast-forward button. He watched Willow as she paced in a sped-up, unnatural fashion, Nurse Brown's head movements far more noticeable when sped up via fast-forward, and Gideon barely moved. He pressed the play button, then rewound a little, then pressed play again when he found the spot where Willow started talking again.

*"She started **crying** and . . . I couldn't figure out what was wrong. She wasn't hungry, her diaper felt fine, she . . . she was just crying and I couldn't figure out why and I started to panic because what if it was a sensory issue, what if holding her was hurting her, so I put her down in her crib, but she wouldn't stop crying and I just didn't know what to - !"*

She stopped herself and took a deep breath. Chilton was starting to lean forward in his chair, the anticipation for what she was going to say building. Gideon and Nurse Brown waited for her to continue.

"What did you do, Agent Graham?" Gideon asked.

"I . . . after a while, I just couldn't take the crying anymore and I left the room and I got Abigail and she went to take care of it and . . . she stopped crying easily after that. I don't even know what she did, I was just . . . thankful the noise had stopped and . . . ."

". . . What aren't you telling me, Agent Graham?"

Willow was crying, Chilton could tell from how her shoulders were shaking.

"I w-wanted to smother her to - to make her stop crying, to apologize for doing this to her, to - to just make whatever was wrong go away."

Willow then broke down crying at that, covering her mouth and her body shaking. She moved to lean against the wall and slid down the wall across from Gideon. Gideon watched her, Chilton unable to read his expression due to the footage quality. Nurse Brown slowly approaches her and kneels down beside her. He places a hand on her shoulder, gently. Chilton cannot hear what Nurse Brown said, but Willow looked up at him with a tearful eyes.

Chilton made a note to himself to get better microphones because he can't hear a word Brown and Willow are saying to each other.

"Nurse Brown is right, Agent Graham. Why don't you have some time to yourself? Not here, here isn't fun. Seeing that I can't take you somewhere nice myself, you can take whoever you feel most comfortable with to whatever . . . it is you like to do when you're not profiling serial killers. Just . . . give yourself a break from the not-husband and the nanny and the baby. Then you can go back and figure things out."

"I'm not sure I want to. I'm - I'm scared. I don't - I don't want to hurt my baby."

"You won't, Agent Graham. Trust me."

Oh dear.... That didn't sound good at all. But it could work in Chilton's favor when it comes to Jack Crawford....

Chilton sighed and he took out the disc. He had some phone calls to make.

He's No Good For You

Chapter Summary

> Jack and Hannibal are brought to Baltimore State Mental Health Institute. Willow visits Gideon once again. They watch the security footage in real time.

Jack was angry. And confused. And worried. And he could tell that Hannibal was equally so.

They walked side by side down the hall. Chilton was standing there, waiting for them.

"So glad you could make it," Chilton said, with that smarmy smirk that Jack didn't like. "This way."

He led them into his office, and Chilton sat down behind his desk. Jack sat down in one of the chairs across from Chilton, but Hannibal stayed standing.

"What is the meaning of this?" Hannibal asked, his voice sounding strange. Jack would go as far as to say it was trembling, but not quite. But this news clearly was taking its toll on Hannibal.

"I really do think you should sit down, Dr. Lecter. I know this has come as quite a shock about your . . . girlfriend."

Hannibal's back stiffened straighter, which Jack hadn't thought was possible.

"She is more than my girlfriend."

"Fiancée? Or have you not proposed?"

Jack could see the slight bob of Hannibal's Adam's apple, and both he and Chilton took that as a no, Hannibal and Willow were not engaged.

"Well, I think it's safe to say that the answer if you did ask her would be no."

"Dr. Chilton, if you could . . . explain the situation that's on your security footage tapes more clearly, I think that would be more productive," Jack said, giving Chilton a scolding look. But he also glanced at Hannibal, trying to gauge how the other man was handling the situation.

"Very well. Essentially what's on the tapes is Agent Graham fraternizing with Abel Gideon. Instead of going to her therapy appointments that Dr. Lecter arranged for her, she's been coming here and talking to Gideon and interacting inappropriately with Nurse Brown. By inappropriately, I mean that she accepts physical touch and comfort from him in the moments where she has broken down crying in her conversations with Gideon."

"I don't understand," Hannibal said. "Why would she lie about going to her therapy with Dr. Du Maurier? Why would she be coming here?"

"That's the really interesting part," Chilton said, his smirk still in place. "She has serious concerns that she's going to murder the child she has with you, and she has been talking to Gideon about how much of that may actually become a reality."

"What!?" Jack exclaimed, catching himself in the outburst too late. He looked over at Hannibal to see how he was taking it.

Hannibal was always so reserved. Kind, but reserved. This was honestly the most emotion Jack had ever really seen on his face before, and it was breaking Jack's heart. He looked devastated. Lost. Confused. Like the rug had been pulled out from under him and he didn't know how or why or where it went.

"And you have this on video," Hannibal said. Chilton nodded.

"I can play the video for you if you'd like."

"There's no need...."

"Is she a danger to the baby?" Jack asked.

Hannibal closed his eyes, and the smirk slowly faded away.

"The last time she was here, it honestly looked like she had come straight here after an incident with the baby crying and her being unable to make it stop, and then the urge came over her and made her afraid. She gave the baby to the nanny and then showed up here," Chilton explained. "Gideon talks as though he's trying to comfort her, but we can't trust that. And while Nurse Brown has an impeccable record, I'm concerned as to what his motivations are with allowing these visits, and he knows that he is not supposed to engage with visitors beyond guiding and transport."

"You think Gideon is trying to make Willow be a danger to the baby?" Jack asked.

"Did she say on the tape why she came here instead? Why not come to me? Or Dr. Bloom?" Hannibal interrupted.

"She did say. She said that Gideon knew what it felt like to want to murder his child, so he would be able to tell her if she was feeling the same way." Chilton sighed. "It's possible her empathy is biting her in the ass and Gideon is manipulating that, in an attempt to get back at all of us for the Chesapeake Ripper situation. Agent Graham showing up is like an opportunity just falling into his lap."

"We have to put a stop to this," Jack said. "Hannibal, you'll have to - "

"Dr. Chilton?"

A nurse poked her head into the office, and the three men looked over at her.

"I'm a little busy at the mo-"

"You told us to tell you if Agent Graham came by again."

Jack and Chilton stood up.

"Where is she right now?"

"Nurse Brown was taking her down to see Gideon again."

"When did she first arrive?"

"About ten minutes ago."

"She's probably already down there by now.... Thank you, Nurse."

The nurse left them, going back to her duties.

"Join me in the surveillance room, gentlemen?"

They hurried to the surveillance room, Jack not liking this one bit. What he *wanted* to do was to march down there and stop it this instance. But he also understood where Chilton was coming from. This would give them further evidence as to what was going on. He just hoped it didn't hurt Dr. Lecter too much.

Hannibal was quiet as they watched the footage.

Willow came into view, stopping in front of Gideon's cell, too close to the glass.

"Hello, Agent Graham. Feeling better today?"

"Yeah. I followed your advice. It was actually kind of fun."

Jack's eyes widened, suspecting the worst.

"Good, good. So who did you go out with?"

Huh?

Nurse Brown stepped up to stand beside her. What he was was inaudible. Gideon's eyebrows flew up.

"Oh my! Cheating on Dr. Lecter, are we?"

"No! Don't be ridiculous. Matthew was just convenient. I wouldn't want to worry the others."

"Dr. Bloom and Dr. Lecter and whoever else you're friends with."

They could see Willow's head nodding.

"It was a perk that Matthew was good company."

"Very interesting, very interesting. And have you interacted with the baby since?"

"No. I'm . . . too scared to. And Abigail is handling taking care of her very well.... My presence feels . . . ."

"Pointless?"

Willow nodded again.

Jack furrowed his eyebrows as he watched Nurse Brown bring his hand up and place it on her upper arm, drawing her attention to him. He brought his mouth close to her ear, and they couldn't hear a word. But they could catch the beginning of a smile before she turned her head back to Gideon.

Jack glanced at Hannibal, and he could see pure, seething anger in his eyes, and it was rather terrifying.

"Aw, aren't you two adorable. I feel like I'm the presence of a budding romance." Gideon remarked.

"Stop it," Willow said, not sounding like she was taking either of them seriously.

"No, I'm serious. I mean, I would rather be the one to take you in a manly fashion, but if I can't be the one to take you away from Dr. Sleeps With the Nanny - "

"He's not sleeping with Abigail, he's old enough to be her father."

"Either way, he's not good for you if he's ignoring you now that he has a baby. He clearly isn't making sure you feel comfortable about her - "

"Maybe that's my own fault."

"Agent Graham. Look at me."

Willow - sweet, autistic Willow, who rarely looked anyone in the eye - lifted her head and seemed to be making eye contact with Abel Gideon.

"Don't you ever let anyone treat you less than the important, powerful woman that you are. I don't care if they could kill you, I don't care if they have more money than you'd ever possess in your life, I don't care if you love them. Don't let them treat you like shit."

"Doesn't that include you?"

"I've treated you wonderfully, aside from some sexual remarks and flirtations."

"That's what I mean."

"Ouch!"

Willow laughed. It was obvious she didn't quite mean it. It was obvious they were friends now.

Matthew Brown still had his hand on her arm, and she had done nothing to make him remove it.

Hannibal suddenly departed from the room and stormed towards the elevator.

"Dr. Lecter!" Jack called after him, rushing to follow him. Chilton followed suit.

Hannibal reached the elevator before them and was inside it and pressing the button to go down to Gideon's floor, the door closing as Jack and Chilton reached it. Jack then made for the stairs, leaping down them.

Jack reached the floor about a minute after Hannibal did, rushing as quickly as he could to where the cells were.

The scene Jack came upon was Hannibal ripping Matthew Brown off of Willow and throwing him to the ground with great force - complete with a kick to the solar plexus. Brown hit the floor hard, his head making a sickening sound as it bounced against it.

"DR. LECTER!" Jack shouted. Chilton fell behind, slowly to a walk, staring, but Jack jogged towards them right as Hannibal placed his hand firmly exactly where Matthew Brown had been holding her arm.

"We're going home," he said to her, and Willow didn't say a word in response. There was a vague little nod, but nothing else.

Without looking at Jack, Hannibal pulled Willow along. Willow gave Jack a frightened look as she was pulled past him.

Chilton pulled out a walkie talkie and spoke into it. "We need medical down here in front of Gideon's cell. We have a head trauma."

Jack loomed over Matthew Brown. The man had lost consciousness, and there was blood starting to pool underneath him. Jack knelt down, trying to figure out what it was he should do.

"So that's Dr. Lecter."

Jack looked up at Gideon and saw the frown on his face.

"Rather possessive. Ain't he?"

Where'd She Go?

Chapter Summary

Abigail starts to question what's around her.

The last Abigail saw of Willow was when Hannibal and she came home and he was dragging her by the arm down the hall and up the stairs towards the bedrooms. She heard a door slam, then watched Hannibal come down the stairs alone.

She adjusted Mischa's place on her hip. "What happened?"

Hannibal approached her and took a deep breath before he spoke.

"Willow and I are having a misunderstanding. I'm going to need you to not let her near the baby for a while. Do you think you can do that?"

Abigail nodded, bouncing Mischa a little.

"Sure."

He then headed for the kitchen, and Abigail went about her job.

But she never saw Willow emerge from the room for almost an entire week.

Whenever the phone would ring, Abigail was only allowed to answer it once. It was Jack on the other end. She had started to speak, but Hannibal seemed to realize who she was talking to, and he took the phone from her. She mostly wandered off, but she hung back long enough to hear Hannibal say that he "didn't think it would be a good idea to let Willow work when she's so clearly distressed." But she didn't really know what that meant at all....

There was no mention of the fact that Willow literally was not coming out of her room.

On the fifth day of Willow's refusal to come out, Abigail had laid the baby down for her nap, then went to Willow's room. She tried to doorknob, only to discover it was locked.

"Willow?" Abigail asked.

She heard some movement on the other side.

"Abigail?" Willow spoke up, her voice sounding faint.

"Why's the door locked?"

Willow was quiet for a long moment.

"You'll have to ask Hannibal. It can't be locked from in here."

Abigail paused at that, considering the situation.

"Are you hungry?"

She thought she heard a sob from the other side of the door.

"Yes."

"I'll get you something to eat, okay? And I'll find the key."

"Thank you," Willow replied.

Abigail then went down to the kitchen and scrounged up something for Willow. Abigail wasn't a gourmet cook like Hannibal, but she was decent and put something together that was quick but delicious.

Abigail had no idea the meat she was using was human meat, at least until she taste-tested it and placed why it tasted familiar.

It happened a lot in Hannibal's house, and she just hadn't felt like it was a good idea to ask Hannibal why it tasted that way. She didn't really want to know, and she was content to pretend that it was just a misunderstanding at the market. Maybe Hannibal didn't know it was human meat.

But she turned it into a hearty soup and sandwich and set it on the tray, then went to where she knew Hannibal kept his keys. She pocketed the ones that were there - Hannibal was out at work, so his car keys were not in the key bowl - then went back to the kitchen, picked up the tray, then carried it back to Willow's room.

She tried each and every key until she found one that worked. She then unlocked the door and brought the food tray into the room.

Willow lay listlessly on the bed, but pushed herself up as Abigail approached her with the food. She ate ravenously, far too quickly, and it made Abigail frown.

"When was the last time you ate?" she asked.

Willow almost choked as she tried to answer while chewing a bite of sandwich, but she recovered and kept her head down.

"Since we came home from the mental hospital...."

Abigail's frown deepened and her eyebrows furrowed.

"Why were you at the mental hospital?"

Willow took her time answering, taking a few more bites of the sandwich.

"I was talking to Abel Gideon. . . . And not about work."

Abigail waited for more information, but she didn't give it to her.

". . . What happened exactly when you two came home?"

Willow didn't lift her head. She finished the sandwich, then started in on the soup.

"I had . . . lied about where I've been when I'm supposed to be in therapy and . . . he was angry and . . . even angrier at the fact that I've . . . it wasn't a date, it wasn't . . . anything like that, but he wouldn't listen...."

Willow sobbed a little, and Abigail had a feeling she had been crying a long while, stuck in this room with nothing else to do.

"Who did you . . . not have a date with?"

Willow ate more of the soup.

"A nurse from the hospital.... He - he was the only other person who knew what I was talking to Gideon about and . . . and I hadn't wanted to explain to anyone else so it was just . . . convenience, it - it was just *dinner*, I swear."

She looked up at Abigail, eyes full of tears that threatened to fall.

"I believe you," Abigail said, wondering what it was she should do. "Do you want me to talk to Hannibal?"

Willow shook her head. "No. No.... But - but if I'm stuck in here any longer, can you just help . . . feed me? Please?"

This didn't feel right.... Even her father, for all his faults, never starved her for any reason. Even when he was angry....

"Of course I will," Abigail said.

She owed Hannibal, though. He was keeping her secret. And she was keeping his. She was looking after his baby. He was offering her a better place to sleep and live.... She had to take Hannibal's side in this. She liked Willow, but she had to be Hannibal's good girl. It was in Abigail's best interests.

She might end up locked in a room and starved if she wasn't.

"I'm sure he'll let you out soon. He loves you." Abigail said.

Willow laughed in the middle of another sob.

"I don't know anymore, Abigail.... I don't know if I know what that means anymore...."

Abigail frowned more, then knelt down and put both her hands on either side of Willow's face. Willow looked at her, tears rolling down her cheeks.

"He loves you. You're very important to him. He's . . . particular about how things should be, but he loves you and bends over backwards to make you fit into his particular world. He'll move past this and treat you like his princess again."

Willow set the soup aside on the beside table, then wrapped her arms around Abigail and hugged her, crying onto her shoulder. Abigail hugged her back and let her cry on her.

Through the tears, Willow asked, "Wh-what about the dogs?"

"Hannibal's been feeding them, and I've been taking them for walks...."

Willow sniffed. "Thank you...."

She slowly let go of Abigail after a while, then worked on finishing the soup. When she was finished, she placed the bowl back onto the tray and moved the tray out of her lap and onto the beside table.

"Y-you should probably leave before you get into trouble...." Willow said, wrapping her arms around her. Abigail hesitated, but then she heard the baby crying and knew she didn't have a choice.

Willow squeezed her eyes shut and turned away from the noise, curling up on her bed, her back to Abigail. Abigail took the tray and headed out of the room. She locked it behind her, knowing that she had to leave it the way she found it, then went to the nursery to tend to Mischa's needs.

This wasn't sitting right with her.... But she believed what she said. Hannibal would come around. Everything would be fine sooner or later....

Right?

Decisions

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal and Willow talk. Willow makes a decision. It takes the story in a different direction.

Hannibal unlocked the door on the sixth day of Willow's home imprisonment and walked inside, closing the door behind him. Willow sat up on the bed and pressed her back against the wall, having not seen him in days. Hannibal stood in front of the door, continuing to prevent her from leaving.

It was silent between them for a long moment.

"You understand what you've done wrong. Correct?"

Willow nodded, her face dry of tears. She had stopped crying sometime last night. She didn't look at Hannibal as she responded.

"And what is it that you've done wrong?"

He was looking for a certain answer, and Willow knew what to say now.

"I undermined your authority and kept secrets."

"Will you be doing that again?"

She turned her head slightly towards Hannibal, her face and pupils showing no indication that she was lying.

"No."

Hannibal smiled at her, then stepped away from the door and opened it.

"I've made you food that will be easy on your stomach as you start to eat again. It's not healthy to go for so long without food, but also unhealthy to eat too much all at once to rectify the situation."

Willow slowly stood up and walked out of the bedroom, not in a hurry. She took her time as she walked down the hall towards the stairs. Winston rushed down the hall and fell into step with her.

As she walked down the stairs, the other dogs spotted her and bounded towards the bottom of the stairs, happy to see her and begging for attention. She patted the tops of their heads and

scratched them behind the ears as she passed them. They all followed her like little ducklings into the dining room.

Hannibal acted like absolutely nothing was all that different now. As though nothing had happened. He treated her kindly, pulling out her chair for her and then pushing her back in, serving her like he would any dinner guest. He told her that Jack would like for her to call him and let him know that she'll be going back into work and resuming her therapy. It was as though she was actually important in this house.

Willow remembered the textbooks in her psychology classes and how they talked about abusers and how they weren't always mean or cruel. And that it was kind of a give-and-take. You do as I say, I treat you kindly, you don't do as I say, you'll wish you were never born.

Willow just hadn't thought this was like that at all.

She ate and participated in the conversation Hannibal wanted to have, but she was somewhere else, mentally.

She needed a plan to get away. She ended to end this relationship, and she needed to do it soon. But what was she going to do about the dogs? Abigail? Mischa? She couldn't leave them here with him.... She didn't *want* to leave them....

But what else could she do?

She needed to think about it. She needed a plan. She needed . . . .

She needed someone's help. But could she tell this to Jack? Alana? Would they believe her?

Gideon and Matthew believed her.... But Chilton wouldn't let her see Gideon again, not now, and Matthew . . . . Was he okay? He had hit his head really badly....

Willow smiled as Hannibal smiled at her. She could see how happy he was that things were "fixed." Her smile was hollow, and she wanted to break his.

"I told Jack that you had agreed to go on a therapy retreat with me and Dr. Du Maurier. That you came clean about your insecurities, engaged with other mothers who have fears of killing their children - it's more common than people realize, and very few mothers actually go through with it - and that we discussed whether or not it would be beneficial for you to see a different therapist. And that you decided to stick with Dr. Du Maurier. You don't have to actually see her if you don't want to. But it's either her or me you'll be talking to about your concerns about the baby from now on."

She nodded, agreeing to something she had no intention of doing. She supposed that meant she couldn't talk to Jack about it.... Assuming he believed that story, at least. But did he have a reason not to?

She needed at least one ally. And she felt like she knew exactly who to talk to first.

Jack's No Fool

Chapter Summary

Hannibal has Jack fooled on many things. Willow's mental state and safety is not one of those things.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack didn't believe Hannibal's "therapy retreat" story one bit. He knew something fishy was going on, but he also didn't really want to believe what his gut was telling him.

It was telling him that his friend - someone he had trusted with his other friend's safety - was lying to him and was hurting her.

Jack had experience with abusive people. It was something you learned when you grew up in the hood and swore to yourself that you'd be a better man than your father ever was. He knew what the signs were.

He was just angry with himself that he hadn't seen it.

But he also couldn't officially *do* anything if Willow didn't open up to him.

"Willow!" Jack called as he saw her at work - finally - after her week of "therapy retreat."

"Hi Jack. I'm sorry about the sudden disappearance. It won't happen again," Willow assured him, not looking at him but at his tie as she talked.

"Willow, are you all right?" Jack asked.

Willow didn't answer right away.

"Yes. Why wouldn't I be?"

"Because the last time I saw you, you were turning to psychopaths for comfort. And Dr. Lecter forcibly took you away and I didn't see you for a week."

Willow wouldn't look up at him, and while that was normal in a way, Jack didn't like it.

"I was being silly. Letting my . . . empathy get in the way of common sense."

"It was worrying." Jack said. "Should I be worried?"

Willow's eyes darted up to look at him for just a moment, then they went back down to Jack's tie.

"No. I'm sorry I did worry you."

"I don't mind being worried if I have to be. You can talk to me if something is wrong."

"Nothing is wrong," Willow insisted.

Jack knew she was lying.

But it meant his hands were tied until something happened.

It was times like this that he hated being law enforcement. When the rules got in the way of actually helping.

He also knew that that was dangerous thinking, but he couldn't help it.

He would also break the rules when necessary.

Chapter End Notes

I'm ridiculously tired lately (and also getting back into Dragonball Z). I am working every single fucking day of the week now for 8 hours at a time and have a puppy to take care of and I'm so fucking tired.... But I hope you like.

Plotting an Escape

Chapter Summary

Re-enter Matthew, the transition to the second phase of the story continues.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Matthew had suffered a concussion from getting knocked to the floor by Hannibal Lecter, and Frederick Chilton had done an internal investigation into his job. He was currently on suspension but he didn't think he was fired.

Even if Chilton did fire him, it wasn't like he couldn't get another job somewhere else. Nurses were in high demand, and mental institutions didn't exactly care much about their patients. He'd falsify any documentation that he decided wouldn't suit his needs as usual, anyway.

He was lounging in his apartment, watching television like your usual American when he heard an unexpected knock at the door.

He got up and went to answer it, thinking it was the post man or something like that.

His eyes widened when he saw it was Willow.

"What're you doing here?" Matthew asked.

"Can I come in?" she asked.

Matthew stepped aside and let her into the small apartment.

She looked around at the mess - a rather methodical mess. Just enough of a mess to make it look lived in, but it had the air of someone who was always ready to pick up and leave at a moment's notice.

He knew she picked up on that, but she did not make any comment about it as she turned around to look at him as he closed the door and followed her deeper into his apartment.

"I have a problem I need help with," she said.

Matthew shrugged. "I dunno how much I can help you with it. Considering I didn't really like getting my head split open the last time."

Willow frowned.

"I'm sorry."

Matthew shrugged again.

"What's the problem?" he asked, knowing he was probably going to help her anyway. Something about her drew him to her, and his motivations in drawing closer to her - emotionally, considering he physically was keeping his distance right now - was entirely rooted in the fact that something about her meant that she could see who he really was and not shy away from it in the same way that others would. That didn't mean his true self was safe with her, oh no. He wasn't stupid enough to think she'd be safe. But she was accepting. Didn't shy away like others did. There was no denial or rejection with her knowledge. Simply an acknowledgement of how the way things are.

He liked that about her. That was why he felt inclined to help her.

"I need to leave Dr. Lecter's home, but the likelihood that the action will get me killed is high. Domestic abuse cases being the way they are."

Matthew nodded in agreement. "And I'm to help with this . . . how?"

"I know you have plans for vanishing when necessary. I would like to ask if I could simply vanish with you. I'd be bringing the baby, and I still don't feel safe with it. Ideally, I'd also have Abigail, but I don't know how likely it is that she'll willingly come with me."

Matthew walked a little ways to the right, starting to pace slightly.

"Just vanish?"

"I would leave a message for Jack and Beverly. They'd know why I vanished, and I would reappear if Hannibal was placed behind bars. Then everything would go back to normal."

"Would they? Doesn't sound likely."

"That they would go back to normal after coming back out of the shadows or that Hannibal would be placed behind bars?"

"Both."

Willow's mouth curved upward, though Matthew knew it wasn't really a smile.

"What's the plan if that never happens? You just live with me in our hiding-in-plain-sight life? I become the father to your baby and it grows up not knowing any better?"

Willow shrugged.

She had no idea and wasn't willing to make a decision like that when she didn't know him very well.

And while he was showing rather big signs for not being any safer or non-criminal than Dr. Lecter. He could understand that.

"Okay. I'll help you."

He didn't have anything better to do.

"When do you want to disappear?" he asked.

Willow smiled for real, and he felt his breath be taken away by the look in her eyes. She knew he was bad news, but he knew he was bad news who would do whatever she wanted.

Chapter End Notes

Just so this is clear: Willow does NOT know that Matthew is a serial killer. She just having a gut feeling and picking up on evidence that Matthew isn't on her or Jack's side of the law, but she also knows that he's rather taken with her and that that's very useful right now.

Cannibal

Chapter Summary

Dun dun dunnnnnnnnnn

Willow had had a plan. She was waiting for the right time to leave before she enacted her plan.

Unfortunately, things didn't go the way she had wanted.

It wasn't that Hannibal had found her out. Or that Abigail had turned her in or anything like that. She hadn't messed up and no one knew what she was planning outside of Matthew. Matthew hadn't betrayed her.

What happened was that she had followed after Buster into Hannibal's basement. Somehow, the dogs had managed to get the door open, and Willow had gone after them, calling after them to come back here.

Monica helped Buster open a refrigerator that was down there, and Buster jumped up and grabbed something. Willow couldn't see it from the angle her vision was at right then. She hurried after the dogs, closing the fridge without looking inside it and then chased Buster around the basement.

She grabbed the thing in his mouth before she could actually see it, and she immediately froze as she saw what it was.

This was a human leg. This was half of a human leg.

She somehow managed not to drop it. She just stared at it. Buster pawed at her legs, begging for the leg back. It had dog marks on it. Hannibal would know that it had been gnawed at and that the dogs were at fault.

She took the leg and wrapped it up in cerran wrap that she found down there, then wrapped it up in some cloth that she had found. She then set it on the table, then went back to the fridge.

Her brain connected the dots faster than she could really articulate to herself what the conclusion was, but she felt like vomiting.

Hannibal was a cannibal. A serial killer. He had been feeding them human flesh. He -

He could be the Chesapeake Ripper.

It hadn't been the plan, but she couldn't stay there.

She took the leg and ran up the stairs, trying to not run into either Abigail or Hannibal. Miraculously, she ran into neither of them by the time she found a bag to hide the leg inside. The dogs followed her upstairs, and after the leg was hidden in her bag, she closed the door to the basement

She then headed for the front door, still followed by Winston, Buster, Monica, and the other dogs.

"Willow?" Abigail called after her, but Willow didn't turn her head to look at her.

"Work emergency," she said, going right out the door and hurrying to her car.

Abigail watched her from the stairs, then went down and watched her go from the doorway.

Willow got into her car, Winston jumping into the car while he could. The other dogs didn't move to jump in, and it was suspicious enough to take even just one dog. But Willow couldn't really stop to think this through. She probably should have, but she wasn't, she was far too shaken. This was brought to her attention in the worst way and she was probably going to regret this whole thing.

She drove off, taking Winston with her and leaving the baby. She'd have to come back for them - both Mischa and Abigail - at some point after she told Jack what was going on.

She dialed Jack's number as she put the pedal to the metal. She cursed as she got his voice mail.

"Jack, I'm coming to your office, it's an emergency."

She then hung up and sped down the road.

She never reached Jack's office.

Another car slammed into the side of hers - she couldn't remember if she had run a red light or how it had happened exactly. But Winston yelped and cried and then she fell unconscious, the last thing she could remember being her air bag going off.

Where Are You?

Chapter Summary

> Jack has a voice mail, but no Willow. Hannibal doesn't know where she is - and neither does Willow.

Jack was worried. Willow's message on the phone had been so urgent, and now she was no where to be found. He had Abigail sitting in a questioning room with a FBI psychologist who didn't have a relationship with her, and Dr. Bloom was questioning Dr. Lecter a few rooms down. He had numbers ready to dial to start a real search if they couldn't glean anything from Abigail and Hannibal, and he had Beverly working on getting a search warrant for Hannibal's house.

He had a very bad feeling about all of this, and it joined forces with his suspicions that something wasn't quite right between Hannibal and Willow.

He was going to get to the bottom of it if it was the last thing he did.

Meanwhile, in the interrogation room with Dr. Bloom, Hannibal had a very unreadable expression on his face. But that was normal. He was pretty unreadable most of the time. His face was always in his control, and he never really smiled or frowned without a conscious reason to, no matter how trivial it may have seemed.

Before the FBI had showed up at his house, Hannibal had found that someone had been in his basement. A leg was missing. And Willow was gone.

He controlled his face so much that he failed to show any worry over Willow.

He was angry. And he was in danger of being exposed. She no doubt had been on her way to report him to Jack.

He had to find her before they did. And he had no idea where to start. She had left all her friends here in the FBI and Abigail. She had no others. She never mentioned any others. Going back to Dr. Chilton's mental hospital was far too dangerous for her now.

What happened between leaving the house and Jack's office?

Willow was certainly thinking the same thing as her eyes finally blinked open. She could hear the sounds of machines beeping, but the ceiling above her didn't look like a hospital ceiling. She turned her head and realized she was in a bedroom, but not one that she recognized. She turned her head the other way and saw that someone was monitoring the machine checking on her heart rate.

"Ah. So you've finally rejoined us in the land of the living," he said, turning around and walking towards her. He loomed over the side of the bed, and Willow immediately felt a terror sink into her gut at the sight of him. Something about him was screaming at her that he was dangerous. He didn't hide it nearly as well as Hannibal Lecter. "I hope you don't mind that I didn't take you to a real hospital. But you see, I can't really afford another crime on my record. Well, monetarily, of course I can afford it, but it's just so much easier to cover up this little accident and your possible death. I would've just let you die, but my clean-up crew discovered that you had some interesting materials in your car, and that made you interesting."

Willow's eyes widened, and she found she couldn't talk because she had a breathing mask on connected to an oxygen machine. Just how badly had she been injured?

"And I like keeping interesting people who have things to hide around. They're quite useful."

She did hurt all over, but she didn't really feel any pain in her chest area that felt like it was more than bruising. The man took the oxygen mask off and turned off the machine.

"So who are you? And why was there a severed leg in your car?"

Willow stared at him, and she struggled to make herself talk.

In fact, she ended up not speaking at all. Tears started to prick her eyes as the fear and stress got to be too much.

Hannibal was going to find out that she knew. Hannibal was going to know she tried to contact Jack. Hannibal was going to come after her, and she had no way to protect herself from that.

And this man was dangerous, she didn't know how or why but he was, and she was vulnerable and defenseless and at his mercy, and where *was* she?

The man shushed her and quickly moved about. He placed a bit of thin cloth near her eye as she cried and gathered her tears into it. Her chest was starting to hurt more. The man did nothing more to soothe her - and she doubted he was trying to soothe her in the first place.

"Take your time. You're not leaving here after all."

It took a long while, but when she got enough of a hold on herself, she managed to stammer out, "Where - is Winston?"

"The dog?" the man asked, and she nodded. "Would you cry more if I said we put him out of his misery?"

Her face scrunched up, and he had an evil glint in his eye as he mock-pouted.

"Mason," said a woman's voice, firmly.

The man turned around to look at someone Willow couldn't see from her position. He then rolled his eyes.

"The dog is fine. We figured if you were a serial killer, you'd leap right out of that bed and slash our throats, broken bones be damned, if anything really happened to it."

Is that what broken bones felt like? She wasn't quite sure - it wasn't feeling like the descriptions in books, but she never did feel pain like others did. It still hurt, though. It hurt a lot the longer she was awake.

"Are you a serial killer?" the woman asked. She stepped closer, and Willow could just barely see her. What she could see of her was very pretty, though. Hair pulled tight in a severe bun, but she carried a power around her that Willow found attractive.

"The - the leg belongs to the Chesapeake Ripper. As - as in he removed it from a victim. I stole it from his house as evidence. I was - I was - "

"Going to turn him in. But we hit you with our car," Mason finished for her.

"And now you're screwed," the woman added.

Willow nodded.

"Who are you?" the woman asked firmly.

Willow wetted her lips and took a deep breath.

"Willow Graham."

"Of the FBI?" Mason asked, eyebrows raised. She nodded.

Mason and the woman looked at each other for a moment. Then Mason turned back to look at Willow.

"Welcome to the Verger estate, Ms. Graham. You won't be leaving anytime soon."

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